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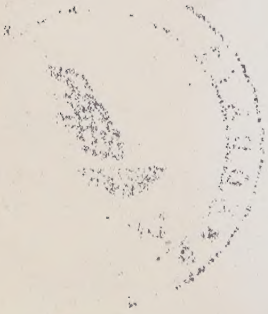

FRIENDS

AT THEIR OWN FIRESIDE;

OR,

PICTURES

OF THE

PRIVATE LIFE OF THE PEOPLE

CALLED

QUAKERS.

BY MRS. ELLIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE WOMEN OF ENGLAND"—"EDUCATION OF CHARACTER," &c. &c.

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FRIENDS AT THEIR OWN FIRESIDE.

CHAPTER I.

From the quiet picture of human life which has been thus far presented to the reader's view, it becomes necessary now to lift the veil so as to see what elements of strife and sorrow are stirring beneath the surface.

It is ever thus in the affairs of this lower world, that the smoother and more uniform the surface of the current, the rougher are the rapids when they do occur, and the steeper the descent where the pent-up waters fall. It is ever thus when the active principles of nature are so far ignored as to suppose that human beings can be managed like machines. It is ever thus where business is pursued as the only lawful occupation; and where the heart, with all its spontaneous affections and impulses, is treated as nothing more than the creation of an idle fancy, or a romantic dream. What, in fact, can be more ominous of

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future danger to a family than the habit of supposing, because the hands are demurely folded, that they are incapable of mischief; that because there is an outward conformity with decorum in look and manner, there is no burning passion, or rebellious feeling beneath; or that because there is kept up from day to day a constant strain upon the powers of calculation as to number, weight, and substance, or any other qualities of mere matter, there is no wandering of imagination into the forbidden fields of beauty and enjoyment, all the more attractive because of the contrast which they present to the dull routine of actual life.

In this manner, perhaps more than in any other, the Society of Friends have erred in judgment, while most correct and scrupulous in aim. Afraid of the evil without, they have neglected to provide against that within; and, acting too much upon the negative system, have taken it for granted, that a condition of apparent emptiness and nothingness, must necessarily be one of innocence, purity, and peace. The *positive* culture of all the human faculties as the natural inheritance of man received from the hand of God, and the direction of such faculties into channels of

healthy and wholesome exercise, even when they have no relation to the claims of trade or commerce, would seem, in former times, never to have constituted any portion of the philosophy of this otherwise shrewd and intelligent Society. Music being to them a forbidden indulgence, and until very recently the arts of design being rather discouraged than otherwise, there was nothing but reading left available to them in their leisure hours; and that resource was often so limited in its range, as to afford but little attraction to the youthful mind. Hence there has probably never yet been in any society such greedy and indiscriminate devourers of novels as occasionally might be found amongs the Friends; so that the most vehement, spasmodic, and highly-wrought productions of the poet, the dramatist, and the novel writer, have been seized upon, perhaps by stealth, and read with an avidity seldom known to those who are accustomed to occasional indulgencies of this kind under the careful supervision of some judicious parent or friend.

Of course these remarks refer more to the past than the present—to a time when music was so rare a thing to the members of this Society, that in cases where an ear for music was a natural

gift, the desire for music amounted to an absolute passion, not unfrequently indulged in stolen opportunities, and at the cost of much family disunion and grief.

Whether from similar causes, it is difficult to say, but whilst placing the average morals of the Friends decidedly high, it must be confessed that in the midst of the peaceful calm of their outward lives, there have occasionally arisen solitary instances of the most terrific disruption of the laws of propriety and order, and the grossest deviation from the line of right. That such instances have occurred chiefly where there has been no real spiritual earnestness for their children's good on the part of the parents, it is but fair to suppose—chiefly where there has been a mere outward or nominal restraint with, perhaps, excessive eagerness in the pursuit of money; and consequently a very defective exemplification of the Christian character in those who held the reins of government.

It was thus with the family of the Rutherfords, as already described; and however revolting it may be to detect the worldly spirit in its absolute greediness of gain, under an aspect of assumed self-denial for conscience sake, it is

equally just to human nature, regarded as a whole, as it is essential to the truth of the picture in hand, to admit that such characters are, and ever have been, found amongst those who, as a community, believe themselves called out of the world and its vanities to uphold a standard of integrity and purity before mankind. The most astonishing and anomalous feature in this picture is the credit and the sanction awarded to such persons by those whose lives and characters are governed by a higher and a holier rule. Perhaps this also may be accounted for by that closing of the eyes upon the inherent wants and tendencies of human nature, for which the Friends are so remarkable, as well as from the fact of their own exemption from the worldly and selfish spirit, sometimes rendering them slow to suspect, and blind to perceive it in others.

Upon no other principle could that implicit faith in the Rutherfords, which was manifested by Jacob Law, and many other friends be accaccounted for, — a faith which was not ill grounded, so far as outward restraint and rigid discipline were concerned. Amongst this Society there is always much to be done in the way of discipline, both of a public and

private — a social and domestic nature; and some members of the body become necessarily engaged in appointments for carrying out this discipline; sometimes acting in committees; sometimes with one or more colleagues; sometimes alone, in dealing officially with delinquency, examining claims, dispensing or withdrawing assistance, and judging of doubtful cases, with an endless amount of similar business: all which rests weightily upon the shoulders of some who stand as pillars in the different meetings, although they may never have felt themselves called to *appear*, as it is worded, in the ministry.

Such a pillar was George Rutherford, and endowed with a naturally shrewd though slow intellect, so rigid was his habitual adherence to rule and precedent; so unflinching, too, was his determination in carrying out what appeared to him to be in accordance with Friends' principles; and so small the allowance he was disposed to make for youth, temptation, or natural weakness of character, that scarcely could any doom be more terrible even to those who had gone but a very little astray, than to fall into the hands of this unsparing wielder of the rod of discipline.

As already stated, there were means discovered

in his own household for evading, where opposition would have been hopeless, and defiance worse than vain; and the channels through which unlawful indulgence might thus be obtained, had been so long opened, that every new member of the household was initiated into the ways of finding pleasure, simultaneously with the graver lessons which he had been sent to learn.

And no one thought much harm of this. It occurred as a matter of course; and he would have been looked upon as a very unmanly youth who showed any scrupulousness about falling in with the general habits of this portion of the family. Of course there would always be a difference in the extent to which individual licence was indulged. Some, and indeed most, preferred companionship in their amusements. Paul Rutherford alone admitted no one entirely into his confidence. To a certain extent he had associated himself more closely with Reuben than with any one else; but Reuben often confessed to himself, and sometimes to others, that he did not, and could not, understand his friend Paul. He himself was easy enough to understand—somewhat too easy in the way in which he laid open the worst and darkest features of his own character.

It was, in all probability, this mystery which hung about Paul—this seeming confidence, which always terminated at a certain stage, which had gradually undermined the intimacy once existing between them, at the same time that every appearance of outward cordiality was carefully maintained.

This Reuben would have been sorry to relinquish on his sister's account. Besides which, like the rest of the family, his opinion of Paul was much influenced by the preference of one so correct, and pure, and scrupulous in all matters of right as Susannah. They little knew how deep and tender was the womanly nature of that hidden heart—how prone to trust where it had first learned to love; nor, beyond this, did they know by how practiced a deceiver her simple confiding nature had been beguiled. Had they known all they would probably have rushed to the extreme of doubting those secret professions of attachment in which Paul was so great an adept; for who could have penetrated his inner life without believing him to be altogether base and vile.

And yet, in his case, as in so many others, it is probable there were seasons of revolting from the evil which he still pursued—of longing to return

—of even clinging to some little hold upon a good which was not his own, as if it could help him to escape from that abyss which seemed for ever yawning at his feet. How many men thus circumstanced have sought the love of virtuous and unsophisticated women. Yes, sought it, as the only drop of real sweetness which life retained for them—sought it sincerely, too, with something like a fitful and vague determination to deserve it. How many, let the memory of woman's wasted affections tell, for there is no other record in which this sad history can be truly read.

Although Paul Rutherford had lately become a less frequent visitor at the Grange, he maintained a constant correspondence with Susannah by letter, and it was but natural, that in writing to him about the time of the coach accident, she should speak of the foreign gentleman so fortunately rescued, and cared for in the comfortable residence of Aunt Greenfell. Immediately after this communication, Susannah was startled by a few hasty lines from Paul, requesting to know more about this foreign gentleman—his name, place of residence, and anything else which she might be able to discover, especially whether he was much hurt,

and what probability there might be of his proceeding on his journey.

Susannah described faithfully all that she was able to learn. C. H. Rosen was the address of some letters which were found about the stranger's person, and Hamburgh was undoubtedly the place from whence he had come; but as to his removal from his present quarters, the great question seemed to be whether the poor man would live from day to day. With one limb broken, another dislocated, and many serious bruises, he was helpless as a child, and still remained at times delirious, so that no questions to any purpose could be put to him, nor was it allowed by the doctor that he should be disturbed by any but the nurses entering his room.

This was all decisive enough for the present; but again Paul wrote. The name was not sufficient. Was he of the firm of Schwartz and Rosen? That must be easy to ascertain. Could not Susannah obtain possession of some of the letters, so as to make out this fact?

No one could go about the business of investigation more prudently than Susannah; and so innocently too were her inquiries pursued, that she felt no fear of betrayal in what she did. Her

natural calmness and quietness of manner proved a better safeguard than could have been afforded by any more definite and intentional precaution.

Still it was not much that could at first be elicited, for the sufferer remained long in a most precarious state. It had been early discovered by those around him, that the chances of his recovery were lessened by the agitated condition of his mind, whenever returning consciousness rendered him alive to his actual situation. There was some cause, to himself most urgent, why he wished to pursue his journey as far as London; but as he spoke chiefly in a language which no one near him clearly understood, and as the greatest injury he had received affected his right arm, it was impossible for him to make his wishes known, even by writing, and this privation greatly aggravated the impatience and vexation which retarded his recovery.

Of course the female part of his attendants, impressed with a certain idea of mystery attaching to those foreign sounds, which in the stages of delirium were very foreign indeed to them, shook their knowing heads, and whispered strange insinuations about robbers, and murderers, and many dreadful things; especially the commission of some

crime which lay heavy on the man's soul—some deed of horror, committed in that far off country from whence he had escaped to meet the just retribution of his crimes in this sudden and terrible catastrophe. Especially through the nightly watches were these pictures of horror conjured up, so that the servants of the house, unaccustomed as they were to any other than the most correct and orderly transactions beneath that roof, very naturally wrote off to their mistress the most urgent remonstrances against being left with so suspicious a character upon their hands. Once or twice they had attempted something of this kind in speaking to Jacob Law, when he came to look after the patient; but meeting with a hasty, and not very gentle rebuke, they thought it better policy to confine their appeals to the lady of the house.

And very naturally too did the widow Greenfell take up the idea that her house was in some sort desecrated by what was going on within its walls. It is just possible that had the state of her feelings been thoroughly investigated, considerable weight would have been found to attach to the spoiling of furniture, and other damage of a similar nature. But of this she spoke not so much as of

the "strangeness" of her brother Jacob, in choosing to put such people into her house, and she a widow and unprotected.

To all this Dora responded warmly; yet ever as she pondered and questioned what sort of person the foreigner could be, there lurked about her pretty face a peculiar kind of interest, which seemed unmistakeably to indicate that she would like exceedingly to see and enquire for herself about this foreign gentleman.

"A *Gentleman* I think they say he is. Is it not so, Mamma?"

This was a question often asked by Dora, and as often she peeped back into the letters which described the case, on nothing so intent as on discovering whether the stranger had any claim to be considered *interesting* or not.

Alas! for poor Dora's romance! The servants actually wrote about untidiness, disorder, and uncomfortableness of every kind; concluding always with this assurance, that things were not at all as mistress would like, or had been used to have them.

"I think, my dear, we had better return home directly;" said the widow to her daughter, after receiving one of these letters.

"I think we had," replied Dora, "without loss of time."

"I do wonder at my brother," said the older lady."

"I don't wonder much at anything men do;" observed Dora, "especially when trouble is not likely to come upon themselves."

"Why, to be sure, " said the mother, "there is Jacob's own house, quite near."

"Not quite so near," said Dora, "and perhaps they thought as ours was empty, they might do as they liked with it. Or, perhaps, uncle thought it might not be safe, to place a foreign gentleman under the same roof with his sweet Lydia."

"Indeed!" said the widow, with a toss of the head; and a glance of peculiar complacency at her own fair daughter. But she checked the remark which was about to follow, adding gravely—"I really do think I will write to Susannah, and say, that we expect to be at home the early part of next week."

"Yes, do;" said Dora. "Besides I want to know what all this fuss at the cottage is about. Lydia wrote to me that she never saw William so interested in anybody as the Mansfields, and her father too, she says is quite taken up with some

scheme they have for bringing them all to live at the Grange. I don't fancy I shall like them much. But I suppose that does not signify. If they don't ask us about who shall take possession of our house, they are not likely to care what we think about the occupants of theirs. Only I do hope that William is not going to take a fancy to that little governess."

It was evidently a case of grievance into which these two ladies talked themselves, so that the sooner they could reach home to see and to set things right for themselves, the better.

In the meantime Susannah quietly pursued her observations, carefully reporting to her correspondent, not what was surmised by the nurses and servants, for to that she attached little importance, but all that she could gather from the doctor, to whom she had spoken of the desirableness of ascertaining who this stranger really was; and so reasonable did this suggestion appear, that he willingly supplied her from time to time with such scraps of information as he was able to elicit, without any considerable disturbance to his patient.

By this means it was ascertained that so far from being a robber, or a murderer, the stranger

was in some way connected with a commercial house in Hamburg, of that very firm respecting which Paul Rutherford had made so many, and such urgent enquiries. The question next in importance seemed to be, how long the patient would be likely to be detained by his injuries, before proceeding on his journey, or before being able to write? This also sounded reasonable enough to the doctor, but it was a question at which he shook his head.

"No doubt," he said, "Mrs. Greenfell is anxious on this point, and I shall be truly glad to set her mind at rest, but the case is very complicated, and it is impossible to speak with any certainty of the future."

In pursuing these enquiries, Susannah never once betrayed from what source her desire for information arose. The name of Paul was never mentioned. It was a name which did not flow readily from her lips at any time; but on the present occasion he had charged her not to mention him in the matter at all. "It was," he said, "on behalf of a friend that the information was so much desired, and he often repeated that in serving this friend, Susannah would be most effectually serving him.

This was enough for one who habitually went about simply as an agent for the good of others, seldom enquiring what claim they had upon her services, still less grudging either time or trouble in the execution of any duty to which she might be called; and especially in this instance, esteeming it a privilege to be the honoured instrument of doing even a little service for any friend of Paul's.

Thus far in her experience at home, and that was the sphere of her practical duties, Susannah had been brought into contact only with the upright and sincere, whose rectitude of principle, and purity of purpose, she had never had occasion to doubt. Hence that unquestioning and perfect trust with which she placed her services at the disposal of one whose honour she never thought of questioning, more than that of her father, or of any one beneath the parental roof. It had never been the habit of this family to suspect others of being less worthy than themselves. Truthful and upright in all their own transactions, they felt no tendency to suppose that others were actuated by less of integrity and truth; and Susannah especially would have felt a certain loss of dignity as well as sense of pain in admitting that any one

upon whom she looked favourably, could be capable of motives otherwise than just and right. The great wickedness of the world without, she believed in, because she heard of it from books, and from men; but to her there was a wall of adamant which separated the evil from the good. The good she held around her, in her heart and home —the evil she knew not, and did not care to know.

CHAPTER II.

The time arrived at last when Susannah Law had exhausted her entire supply of information. All had been told, except that she had a fuller account to give, by stating that the stranger's name was Carl Heinrich Rosen, and that he was the son of one of the partners in the house of Schwartz and Rosen, but not a partner himself.

A few minutes after the receipt of this letter, Paul Rutherford might have been seen pursuing his silent way from his father's house to that of a certain Jeremiah, of whom mention was made in an earlier portion of this story. This man had for many years been a confidential agent in the Rutherford business, but had lately fallen into some slight disrepute with the master; not from any suspicion of his general integrity, but because he had been found out in the fact of encouraging Paul and other members of the household in pur-

suing a course of conduct at variance with the principles of Friends. On one occasion a party of the young men had gone from Jeremiah's house to the theatre, and had been let into their rooms at midnight by the servant Lizzie Brian; in consequence of which the girl had been summarily dismissed. It was believed, however, that she still lived in the town of Layton, though in what capacity nobody knew. Report said that she was married, and without doubt she was seen about this time with an infant in her arms; but so long as she was fairly off the Rutherford premises, the head of that family cared little what her circumstances or destiny might be.

In addition to the reasons stated, there was another cause of objection to Jeremiah's house, as a place of resort to the young men. This was the character of one of his sons, a sort of scapegrace, whose mode of life it would have been difficult to define, except that he was accustomed to appear and disappear at intervals, spending the intermediate time in different continental towns, most frequently at Hamburg; but always managing by some means or other, to keep himself pretty well supplied with articles of merchandise, many of which were known to be contraband.

Again and again the mandate had gone forth that none of George Rutherford's young men should enter the doors of Jeremiah, especially when his son was at home; and yet the intercourse was generally renewed with fresh spirit after every temporary interruption.

On the occasion of the last letter from Susannah having arrived, Paul Rutherford walked straight into the house, and by a sign which was well understood, indicated his desire to see the master alone. Their interview was long, and secret. It lasted until the evening closed in, and the lamps were lighted in the streets. From this house, Paul went by a back way into a kind of court, and then pursued his walk towards the outskirts of the town, not unfrequently casting a furtive glance over his shoulder, as people sometimes do involuntarily, when they wish to know who may chance to be behind or beside them.

The town of Layton was one of considerable trade and bustle, just large enough for its inhabitants not always to know each others business; and just small enough to be made up chiefly of second rate undistinguished houses.

Along an obscure street of this kind Paul

Rutherford walked rapidly, his figure muffled in a cloak more closely than the state of the weather rendered necessary; until arriving at a narrow passage or alley, he turned suddenly round a corner and then, after applying a key to a door in a garden wall, was soon screened from the observation of any passer by.

We must now follow him closely, for his movements are both rapid, and stealthy, into a somewhat ordinary dwelling, and up a flight of stairs into a chamber fitted up with an air of comfort almost approaching to luxury, exceedingly unlike the other apartments of the house.

At the door of this chamber, Paul was met by a handsome looking woman with her finger raised, as if to caution him against disturbing some one within. But what did Paul Rutherford care for this caution? There was only a sleeping child to be disturbed, and he had come upon business of much greater consequence than the slumbers of a babe.

"He has been so ill—poor little dear." said the woman, turning towards a cradle by the fire, and stooping down as if no object in the world could be half so important as that little fragile form.

Paul took no notice whatever, but seating himself in an easy chair, began to unfold the wrappings of his person which had been anything but comfortable. His look and manner were those of a man who is both perplexed, and dissatisfied; but his object was to conciliate, so he gave no expression in words to the vexation he was secretly enduring. Still, he would not look at the baby, nor listen to the woman's talk. It was all hateful to him—everything was hateful just then. He mastered himself, however, so far as to say, with a pretence to good humour—"You don't happen to have a five pound Bank of England note in the house to-night, do you, Lizzie?"

"I—a five pound note?" exclaimed the woman, rising from her stooping posture, and staring him full in the face. "Why you are making game of me. When have I had five pounds to bless myself with, I wonder?"

"Come, come, Lizzie," said Paul, "Be honest for once, and look into that precious box of yours, and hand me out the cash."

The box to which Paul alluded, was always kept locked, and he would have been a clever man, who could have obtained the key. Whether it contained money, or notes, Paul was not so

anxious to know, as he appeared; but that it did contain one thing upon which he wanted to lay his hands, he knew perfectly well.

"Let me have a pound, then; will you, Lizzie, said he, and this time he spoke in so kind a tone, and looked really so much in earnest, that at last the little key was applied to the lock, and Lizzie, with her busy fingers, was begininng to jingle something like money, when Paul, rising suddenly from his seat, exclaimed—"Look at the child!"

The mother flew to the cradle. The child was really ill, and had been convulsed in the earlier part of the day; and Paul assumed a manner very much like concern, as he stooped over it. In the anxiety of the moment, the key of the box had been turned in the lock, as if by a kind of instinct; and although there was really no cause for alarm, the woman could not be satisfied without taking a candle to the cradle, in order to make sure that her babe was still asleep.

"Perhaps he was only dreaming," said Paul. "At all events, he is all right now. So just leave him with me a minute, will you, Lizzie? and run an errand for me. I don't think less than five pounds will serve my purpose. So if you have not got so much as that, I want you to

take this cheque for ten, and get it cashed. You know you have done me that service before."

Lizzie looked for her bonnet. She did not like to leave the house just then. The child might wake, and cry, and the fits might come on again. She had, however, been so long schooled into obedience, without questioning, that she only asked which was the nearest place where she could get the money.

Paul mentioned one that would take her a good while to reach. She looked vexed, and frightened; but said nothing. In another moment she was gone, and the outer door secured behind her.

Here then, suddenly,—almost unexpectedly, and with but little effort, the object of repeated schemes was secured. For many past weeks Paul had been vainly endeavouring to accomplish the purpose of obtaining access, without violence, to the little casket. He had picked up the key which had been dropped while the mother stooped over her child; and now he turned it in the lock, and opened the box. The paper which he had so long been wanting to possess was there. He took it carefully out, replacing those which had been laid upon it, and studiously arranging all things as they were before. Once in his

hand, he could not help casting an exulting look around the room. In another moment he had thrust the paper into the very centre of the fire, leaving not a scrap or shred to tell the secret of its destruction. The next thing was to place the little key upon the floor, exactly where it had been dropped, and the next thing was to sit down, and think.

The annals of human crime contain only what has been actually done. If by any gift of penetration we could read that darker record of what has been only contemplated—of what the corrupt imagination, and base design would have executed, but for that restraining power which sometimes, as it were by force, arrests the uplifted arm, or turns to weakness the strong will of the destroyer—if there was any faithful transcript or memorial of such guilt as this left on the walls of human dwellings, upon the paths of human feet, or stamped upon the features of the human countenance, how should we learn, if not actually to fear our fellow beings, at least to fear that evil which so often wants but fitting time and opportunity to work out its guilty purposes in cruelty and wrong!

But instead of dwelling too gloomily upon this view of human life, let us think, on the other

hand, how much of generous feeling, and benevolent desire, are also buried in the human heart, without even finding any legitimate channel for useful exercise. What burning wishes for the amelioration of suffering and oppression die out without an office or a name! What glorious schemes and heaven-born aspirations fade and fail, leaving no record upon earth—what tender love is never known, or if known, is not appreciated — what self-denial, and devotedness are thrust back, as it were, by adverse circumstances, to be circumscribed, by stern necessity, within the narrow boundary of self!

But all this God knows. For Him, and by Him, are such feelings given, and to Him do they tend. Thus, no fragment of them can be wholly lost—no throb of the generous heart—no tear of the pitying eye—no aspiration of the noble soul. All are His. And as His alone is the restraining power by which the force of evil is controlled; so peculiarly are those emotions His, which most assimilate with His own nature, and which he is pleased to accept when they lie silent and unrecognised amongst the many works and avocations of mankind, as when they stir the waves of human sympathy, or rouse the nations of the world to deeds of fame.

That with which we have now to do is no generous feeling, no noble purpose; rather the bitter fruit of guilt and folly long persisted in, and heaped up against the day of wrath. Bitter, indeed, are those fruits, if one might judge by the aspect and countenance of that man, who a moment ago sat down to think. He had accomplished his purpose—so far so good. What, then? Every step in advance along the career upon which he was hastening, only showed him greater difficulties yet to be overcome, and dangers more terrible to be escaped. Still, as he said to himself, there was one thing accomplished, upon which his mind had long been set, with resolute and fixed determination. Was the way before him clear or pleasant now that deed was done? He did not ask this question. He had so long ceased to think of pleasure.

But see what thought has seized upon the man, that he sits there staring into vacancy, his eyes dilated, his lips compressed, and his whole countenance and attitude denoting the conception of a new and momentous design? Is it for good, or for evil? The man is entangled in a thousand snares,—a thousand dangers. One tie is already burst asunder. He wants to be entirely free.

He is alone. The door is barred against the only being in the world who has a lawful right to intrude upon his privacy. He is alone; but yet there throbs beside him a little life, hanging as it were by the slenderest thread which any moment might be snapped asunder. Nothing is more reasonable than that the child should die suddenly, without warning, perhaps without a struggle.

Strange, that the mother should have left a phial on the table labelled *laudanum !* He took it in his hand, and looked all round the room with eager searching gaze. His movements now were all rapid as thought—rapid, and sure. A spoon lay glittering in the fire light—everything seemed ready for his purpose. How vexing that his hand would shake, and spill the drops ! How vexing too, that time would fly ! Why had he not thought of this strange chance before, and so been ready to take advantage of it with more certainty ? Still it is impossible the woman should return for some time yet, and there is the medicine cup already used for the sick child, and all things at hand. So he lifts the phial, and counts out the drops one by one: too many will defeat the end. Thus he goes on with care. His hand is steadier now. Five drops are counted, and six; when

suddenly, a crash like falling glass arrests the act, and in another moment the mother's glaring eyes are upon him. She knew the door was bolted. She did not wait for that, but struck in a window with one blow of her clenched hand, and rushed upon him like a lioness.

"Why, Lizzie!" said Paul, in an instant assuming his accustomed manner; "What in the world has happened to you?"

The woman's teeth were clenched. She spoke only with her eyes, and that but for a moment; for, darting to the cradle, she snatched up the still sleeping child, and not until she had pressed her lips to his, and held him to the light, and seen, and brought herself really to believe, that his little life was safe, would she listen to, or admit the consciousness of any other thought. At last she laid him down again in the cradle, taking a long breath like one who is suddenly relieved from some intolerable load; and then looking upwards, and clasping her hands together, she uttered a fervent ejaculation of thankfulness that all was safe. Then, with a true womanly impulse, she sunk into a chair, threw her apron over her head and face, and began to sob as if her heart was broken.

Paul who had now time entirely to recover

himself, took this opportunity for silently replacing the phial, and the spoon. The scent of the laudanum had however diffused itself about the room, and this perhaps had added force and poignancy to those wild apprehensions which had filled the mother's mind.

When her sobs had a little abated, the poor woman began to speak, though still with her face covered, for she seemed ashamed to own, in the presence of the father of her child, those horrible suspicions which could not be harboured for a moment without doing violence to the common instincts of nature.

"Paul, dear," she began, and then stopped again, half choked with her sobs, and tears.

"Don't make a fool of yourself, Lizzie; was all the remark which this poor attempt elicited.

"Paul, dear," she began again. "I know I am a fool, but as I came back, just you know where one crosses the foot bridge over the brook—a little way along the water side, upon a bit of green bank, I saw—indeed I did; so don't tell me it was all fancy—I saw, as sure as I sit here, a dead child lying, all in white—so still, and so like my own sweet lamb."

Here followed a fresh burst of tears, until Paul,

losing all patience, asked for the money, saying he must be gone.

Lizzie now put down her apron, and counted out the money, almost mechanically. It was all right, for on her return, not as she went, did this idea of the dead child take possession of her.

"But I did see it, though," said she, a little recovering herself when she had given up the money.

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Paul. "It was the most natural thing in the world, after the disturbed nights you have had, that fancies of this kind should fill your brain. The child is better now. I would recommend you to take something warm and comfortable, go to bed as soon as you can, get a good night's rest, and then finish me those shirts you have been about so long."

The woman raised her large full searching eyes up to the face of the speaker. She was not quite satisfied. Something had come between him and her too horrible to be endured if it was true—too shocking to be forgiven if it was not; for still there lurked within her heart a secret consciousness of that vague suspicion which had driven her home in a condition little short of madness.

"Paul," she said again, "don't leave me yet."

"Well, what do you want?"

She rose from her seat, and flung her arms around his neck; stern man as he was, standing there without an arm extended to clasp her quivering form, or even so much as an inclination of the head to meet the words which she yearned to pour into his ear.

"Listen to me one moment," she said. "I wont keep you long. I think, Paul, I am changed altogether. I feel so different since I had that precious child to call my own—so frightened sometimes when I am alone, and I used to be so bold. Do you think really there *is* a good God in Heaven, Paul, and a great ugly cruel devil in Hell, trying to get us all away from the sweet angels above?"

"Nonsense!" said Paul, endeavouring to release himself from the woman's hold.

"No, it is not nonsense, I am sure," she continued. "But I am all so dark and lost about these things. I want you to help me, Paul."

"Me?"

"Yes, you. Why not? You have been better taught than I have, and you ought to know better. When I was a girl in old Ireland, the

priests used just to tell us all, and we had no more trouble about it."

"Then why do you trouble yourself now?"

"Why, just for this reason. I know I am a bad wicked creature myself, and—Paul dear, don't be vexed, I don't think you are very good. But that little cherub there, I don't want him to be so dark, and lost, and miserable, as I am sometimes. I want him all the while that he lives to look innocent, and good, and pure, as he does now; and, when he dies, to go up and live with the blessed saints in Heaven—don't you?"

"Of course I do, but he is so young yet, it is not worth while thinking about such things."

"Why, you see, Paul, looking at ourselves as we really are—at me in particular, I fancy it will take a longish while to get me anything like good. So I think sometimes, if only you and I could begin together, Paul, here in this quiet place, where nobody could see and laugh at us. Is there no little prayer you could set me to be learning, that I might repeat it to you when you come?"

Paul shuddered. He would have stripped the woman's arms off his neck, but she clung to him like a drowning creature.

"Oh! Paul," she continued, "There is something so terrible in thinking about Hell! Why, just now, when I only fancied for a moment that you were going to poison the child, I felt as if flames were burning up my heart."

"What made you think of that, Lizzie?"

"I don't know. It came upon me all of a sudden, like a flash of lightning, after I had seen the little white figure laid upon the bank. But you wont hurt the child, will you Paul? Never —never!—from this time until the day of his death?"

"Let me go, Lizzie, and don't talk so foolishly."

"Oh! Paul, I think I am going mad. Is anything shocking going to happen, do you think? I wish you would stay with me to-night, I am so frightened to be left alone. Come, Paul, *do* stay. I'll make you a cup of coffee, the best you ever tasted; and here are the cigars you wanted; and baby sleeps so soundly now. I know he wont cry, and make you cross. Just do me this one little kindness, Paul, and then I will be so good, and not ask you for money for a month to come."

"It is impossible to-night, Lizzie. Some other time."

"But when? You always say some other time, and that time never comes. Why, I am killed with loneliness, though I have the child."

"What would you do, Lizzie, if I should go away, quite out of the country?"

"Go with you."

"But suppose I chose to go alone?"

"Paul!"

There was in this woman's eyes sometimes a threatening flash of passion which might have awed a spirit more susceptible than Paul's. Even he felt this was dangerous ground upon which he had touched, and, assuming a forced smile, as if he had but spoken in jest, he succeeded by some little show of tenderness in at last releasing himself from her mingled threats and caresses.

Perhaps of all persons upon earth there could not have been found one naturally less addicted to scenes and expressions of tenderness than Paul Rutherford; although, from the fact of his own passionless nature he was well able to simulate the gentleness, and softness of speech and manner, which is sometimes mistaken for tenderness of feeling. And yet this woman to whom he had

thoughtlessly, but irrecoverably allied himself while very young, was a creature of ungoverned passion; in all things except her habitual tendency to artifice and falsehood, the exact opposite of himself. There had, most probably, been something in her person, as well as character, which had rendered her peculiarly attractive to him while a youth, inspiring that not uncommon feeling, which dictates to a selfish man, the appropriation of that which he admires, if for no better reason, for the sake of preventing others from preferring any similar claim.

Lizzie herself, too, had a shrewd and pretty certain method of going about anything she determined to accomplish; so between them it had been agreed that a marriage should take place under circumstances of the strictest secrecy. Lizzie had been a Roman Catholic, when she was anything, and preferred the marriage rites of that church to any other, unconscious that they were not binding in the eye of the law. Indeed, her ignorance was such, that nothing could be more easy than to practise upon her credulity so far as to make her feel perfectly satisfied and secure on this point; more especially when, on being dismissed from the service of the Ruther-

fords, a house was taken for her accommodation, in which she was established as the sole mistress, rewarded—and richly, as it seemed to her, for a vast amount of services, by receiving now and then a short visit from Paul himself.

Lizzie, though ignorant of the law, was a great believer in written documents. On the occasion of her marriage, the priest by whom the ceremony was performed had placed in her hands a certificate attesting the fact. This she was proud to retain in her own possession, regarding it as one of her greatest treasures; and had there occurred any rupture between her and Paul, or had any doubt been thrown upon the validity of her marriage, this document would have been exhibited triumphantly before the world.

Nothing, therefore, could exceed this certificate in value, except that living testimonial to what she implicitly believed to be a right and lawful union, which she beheld when fondly gazing on her child. It was her natural birthright to possess a larger amount than usual of the mother's instinct. Previous to the birth of her child, her character had been only half developed; now, what might not have been made of it, had the moulding process fallen into better and more

faithful hands? And he who had assumed the right to perform this duty was now gone—disgusted, weary, heartsick, from her presence, wishing both mother and child at the bottom of the sea.

Nothing could astonish Paul Rutherford so much, in looking back into his past life, as how he ever came to entangle himself with this connection. For the most part he ignored it altogether, knowing that it could be shaken off at any time when he might choose to dare the exposure which a spirit like that of Lizzie Brian's would be sure to bring upon him in her retributive vengeance. It was by no means his wish to bring such a storm upon his head. His habit of life was to move warily, working out his purposes in silence and security. Lizzie must then be conciliated—not defied; sometimes coaxed and humoured, but never driven to extremities. The time might come when he should no longer hold this power of conciliation in his hands; and it was in preparation for such a time that he had destroyed the treasured document. With nothing for it but her own wild words, Paul knew that Lizzie's testimony to their union would be little likely of itself to obtain belief; and there was one quarter, especially, in which he was parti-

cularly solicitous that his utter denial of it should be relied upon as true.

In this manner Paul Rutherford had long been living, as it were, two lives; until he scarcely knew, even in the secret of his own soul, which was the true life—which the false. When mixing on agreeable and social terms with the society at the Grange, it seemed to him as if that was his element—his home—his rest. And to some extent it was so, if the language of poetry is true, that—

"None are all evil."

Most assuredly his best and happiest moments were spent there—had been so spent at least; for nothing was good to him now, nor happy. He could not meet the family at the Grange. Hardened, and practised as he was, there was something in their quiet habits, and more especially in their confiding trust, which more effectually destroyed his self-possession and assumed composure, than any open accusation would have done; and if he did not really love the one who trusted and believed in him the most, he felt a certain something in her presence which compelled a hatred of himself and his past conduct so intense, as to destroy all the satisfaction and

enjoyment which might otherwise have been derived from her companionship.

Until the time of his acquaintance with Susannah, Paul had not believed in the existence of such a woman,—so pure, so self-denying, and so tender; yet so truly dignified, that vice grew shamefaced and contemptible before her, even when she knew it not.

Such were some of the anomalous and contradictory elements of that most miserable existence which this man was enduring, and enduring simply because he had ever been self-seeking—determined to void the things he hated, and to follow those that pleased him best. These, however, were but as the side-shoots of the tree of his ambition. There were purposes and schemes beyond, occupying in his consideration, a more important place than ever woman filled; and to these he has now to devote himself with more of industry and wariness than ever, for an opposing power is already in the field, and the crisis which must soon arise may not be that to which his hopes have been directed.

CHAPTER III.

Those who find their happiness in making their fellow-creatures happy, are seldom without enjoyment. From this source, perhaps, more than any other, Jacob Law derived that fund of cheerfulness and lively energy which distinguished him both in public and private. If his young friend William Greenfell was less remarkable for quickness of susceptibility, and hence was habitually a graver, as well as a more self-possessed man, it was not that his share of happiness derived from active benevolence was less deep and lasting, but that his outward deportment was governed by a certain sense of personal dignity, which did not permit to him much obvious manifestation of feeling on any occasion, and certainly not where such feeling would be exposed to idle or impertinent remark. Thus all which he had been able to accomplish in serving the Mansfield family

had been done with the air and manner of one engaged in the most simple and ordinary transaction. With the same manner he always met the family, either to announce the progress of his plans, or to assist in making ready for their execution; until by the force of his superior will, the father, as well as the daughters, came at last to feel as if resistance would be alike opposed to their own interests, and offensive to one who evidently had their welfare and happiness at heart.

Had it been stated at once to Gilbert Mansfield that he was to give up his business, as well as to change his place of abode, his mind in all probability would have been painfully disturbed; but the great object to be accomplished being that of removing the daughter as speedily as possible from her present home, it was but reasonable to suppose that this change would be the more easily followed by that which related to the father, and his business affairs.

The preparation and fitting up of the cottage at the Grange, had been eagerly entered upon, in the hope that the female members of the Law family would willingly lend a helping hand, and Jacob, without much difficulty, engaged the services of his oldest daughter; but it was strange to

see how little cordiality was evinced by the younger in this usually interesting occupation. No one could imagine what possessed the fair Lydia; for not satisfied to remain merely indifferent, she occasionally betrayed something very much like contempt for the extraordinary efforts made by her father and William Greenfell on behalf of the Mansfield family.

"I do believe the girl is jealous," said Reuben, one day, laughing heartily at his own suggestion; while Lydia only curled her rosy lip the more; and, blushing deeply, disclaimed the possibility of such a feeling in relation to William Greenfell, of all people in the world.

It was not, however, of any vital moment whether Lydia condescended to help or not. The domestic arrangements of her father's house owed but little of their method and efficiency to her good management. So the quiet Susannah worked on in her accustomed manner, never so well pleased as when she knew that the sick could be sustained, or the suffering cheered and comforted by her exertions.

All that was absolutely necessary to the comfort of the cottage was ready in an almost incredibly short space of time. Those embellish-

ments which are naturally suggested by a delicate feminine mind would have required much longer to complete, for Susannah never entered a room without seeing that a curtain might be more carefully adjusted, a chair more comfortably placed, or some vase of flowers, or other simple ornament appropriately added.

It was the season of summer's dying beauty; but the declining year advanced with unusual mildness. The garden was still gay with flowers, and rich in abundant foliage. The fields were still green, and the woods and hedge-row trees only just betrayed the slightest possible tendency to change their summer tints. The afternoon, too, was one of unusual calm and sweetness, with scarcely a cloud in the heavens, or a movement in the leaves; when the sound of approaching wheels was heard in the distance, and soon a carriage might be seen driving slowly down the hill, and along the valley leading to the Grange.

Susannah and her father were both standing at the garden gate to welcome the new occupants of the cottage. William Greenfell had made himself one of the travelling party, whose arrival he announced by riding on in advance, and then dismounting, so as to be ready to render any assist-

ance which might be required. An easy chair, and all things needful had been prepared for carrying the invalid into the house. It could scarcely have been possible for the most requiring person to suggest a want which had not been anticipated and provided for.

For all such occasions, and for a generous and unostentatious supply in cases of suffering or need, the Society of Friends, as a body, have not their equal upon the face of the earth. Their quiet conduct of such matters, too, greatly enhances the value of their kindness; as well as a peculiar method which they have of disclaiming all personal thanks, and expressions of obligation. Their work would be but poorly done, as they would think, if they made themselves, individually, prominent in the doing of it.

Thus, although Alice Mansfield felt herself suddenly translated into the midst of scenes which looked to her lovely as a little paradise, and altogether placed in that very position for which she had been so long and so vainly pining, she could not say—she could scarcely even imagine, to whom especially, or prominently, she owed this most happy and extraordinary change. It was consequently no burden to her to accept the

sum of kindness so generously offered, but rather the cause of deep gratitude to God. With this feeling she raised her beautiful eyes, and looked around on the pleasant cheerful room within; and though unable to utter a single word, her parted lips, and softly folded hands, seemed expressive of that outward calm which is sometimes the true index of inward peace.

Margaret saw and understood what her sister was feeling. She also was too deeply moved with joy and gratitude to be able to utter a word. But having much to do, she managed to hide the tears that would gush into her eyes in spite of all her efforts to keep down every exhibition of feeling. For this purpose she was glad to escape upstairs, under the plea of making some necessary arrangements for her sister. Susannah followed her silently, merely intending to point out where everything was. Margaret, looking round, and hearing her peculiarly soft sweet voice, could control her feelings no longer, but throwing her arms around Susannah's neck, she burst into a flood of tears, exclaiming, "It is too much! you are all too good and kind!"

Susannah Law, always old beyond her years, had a calm motherly way of treating those who

were younger than herself; and, on the present occasion, she pressed the stranger to her bosom, at the same time parting the hair upon her forehead, and kissing it tenderly; and though she uttered not a word, there was something in that mute embrace which the motherless girl accepted as a bond such as time might possibly strengthen, but no accident or change could ever break.

Feeling the present to be an occasion on which the Mansfield family might be best satisfied to be left alone, the party from the other houses, with their accustomed delicacy, in due time retired, leaving them the sole proprietors of an abode so peaceful, and yet so perfect in all its arrangements, that the united work of the kind hands and hearts to which they owed this happy change in their circumstances, looked less like reality than like the illustration of some story of enchantment.

Gilbert Mansfield evidently enjoyed the stillness and the calm; and, though nothing had been at all insisted upon with regard to his withdrawal from those active occupations, which were but little suited either to his talents or his tastes, yet on talking over some affairs which had to be settled with his daughter Margaret on the following morning, she was much encouraged by perceiving a

tendency in his mind to relinquish his business transactions, and live entirely with his children in this abode of peace.

Margaret knew perfectly well, what her father was not conscious of, that business with him had long been adhered to as a sort of necessary cross. He was much addicted to taking up the cross under the idea that it was laid upon him; and, nothing perhaps in the retrospect of his past life ever pained him so deeply, as the idea that he had not only been too worldly, and too high-minded, but also too self-indulgent. He was a man who, under other circumstances, and as the devotee of a widely different faith, would have done penance most sincerely and devoutly. Even now, he persisted in wearing a coarser and more humble style of clothing than was customary with persons in his sphere of life; yet while the daughters never failed to regret this tendency of their father's, they could not but acknowledge, that with his figure, his manners, and especially his fine aristocratic contour of head, no one could mistake him for anything but a gentleman.

It was natural for them to exult in this conviction; but if ever they betrayed a thought or feeling tending to such conclusions, their father

immediately drew back from some habitual indulgence, or adopted some personal disfigurement, so as to plunge again into that state of perfect self-renunciation from which he had been for a moment tempted to escape.

With the utmost satisfaction and delight, Margaret went into her sister's room on the morning after their arrival at the cottage, to communicate what she had gathered from her father's few remarks. She found her sister peaceful and happy, though acknowledging that she had slept but little during the night. Her heart, she said, was so full of thankfulness; "And only think, Maggie," she added, "just as the sun began to shine through the curtains, a little robin came and sat upon the window, and gave me quite a song of welcome. They say the robin's song is sad in Autumn; I am sure I dont find it so."

"Ah, but it is not Autumn yet," replied Margaret, "but bright Summer, for I have been into the garden; and, see here—what lovely roses and jessamines, and heliotrope, and all sorts of charming things; and the air is so mild too. I do believe we shall be able to get thee out amongst the flowers. First, however, let us think of breakfast."

And with that most necessary conclusion, Margaret busied herself as usual about the practical things of the present moment, never tired of exploring little nooks and corners, and places where things might be stowed away; as well as those far more important places where she fancied that her sister's couch might be wheeled, so as to command the best view of the garden, or the most comfortable position by the fire.

All this while, however, there hung over Margaret's head a cloud which she dared not trust herself to speak of, but which effectually obscured to her view the beauty of many present scenes, and especially the prospect of the future. She herself was an assistant in a school, liberated only for a short period of indulgence, but bound to her duties there during a period of years, which had not yet expired; so that by no possible chance, that she was aware of, could she remain with her sister in their pleasant home. Her term of absence was now nearly at an end. She never spoke of this to Alice; but once to William Greenfell she ventured so far as to say, "I suppose there is no consideration on earth that would induce the school committee to release one of their teachers before the stated time?"

"I am not aware that such a thing has ever been done," replied William. "But I will speak with Jacob Law."

Margaret felt immediately that the matter was in good hands. Still, however, she did not dare to hope. Rule and precedent were considerations of such paramount importance, that the idea was perfectly startling in its novelty and its unlikelihood.

Potent, however, as are the considerations of rule and precedent with the Society of Friends, and all pervading as regards their institutions, and especially their public and social transactions with one another, there are occasional instances of personal influence operating with yet greater force. Perhaps it is in fact equally according to the laws of rule and precedent that certain influential members of the community should be listened to, and even yielded to, as if whatever emanated from them could scarcely fail of being right. Hence there have ever been amongst them those whose voices, by some conceded authority, had the power of giving a casting vote in their assemblies, as well as of imparting an effectual bias to opinion in more private matters.

Jacob Law was one of these. He might on

some occasions be thought a little hasty; and younger men would sometimes rise up in the meetings for discipline to make some little show of opposition, for there was a decision and conclusiveness in his manner which not unfrequently provoked a momentary desire to dispute with him the ground on which he stood. But such was the overpowering weight of his influence, and of one or two other Friends who usually thought with him, that all such pretentions to opposition were finally quelled by the unanimous acquiescence of the weightier portion of the community.

In the present instance it might be possible for Jacob Law, though scarcely for any other individual, to bring about the release of Margaret Mansfield from her educational engagements; and William Greenfell knew that he could not place the matter in kinder or more able hands.

It was, besides, a just and reasonable claim which had to be preferred, for no one could supply a sister's place to the suffering invalid, though there were many who might as easily and effectually supply that sister's place in the school. Altogether it was a case which demanded no small amount of time and trouble, as well as care;

but Jacob Law grudged neither, where there was a chance of serving any one in whom he felt an interest. A journey to the scene of Margaret's labours was therefore almost immediately undertaken; and he had the pleasure of announcing to her on his return, the delightful intelligence that she might now devote her undivided interest entirely to the service of her sister—"Only," he added with a smile, "on one condition—that thou shalt sometimes come and enliven us with thy cheerful conversation at the Grange."

And before many days had passed in her new residence, Margaret had good cause to believe herself a welcome guest whenever she found a spare moment for joining the circle at the other house.

Lydia, of all the members of that family, had been the least accessible to any advances on the part of Margaret towards a closer intimacy. Not that she persisted in maintaining that air of discontent with which she had at first regarded her neighbours. So far from this, she seemed altogether changed about this time, being in perfect good humour with everybody, only a little absent sometimes, as if she had a secret source of interest which she was not solicitous that any one

should share with her. It was evidently a pleasant kind of interest, though none of her family knew exactly what it was, and William Greenfell felt himself especially shut out from all participation in it. Robert Moreton was not sorry that he was so, though he himself experienced no better treatment.

One person, and one alone, was the confidant of the fair Lydia, or rather Lydia was hers, and that was Dora. The widow Greenfell and her daughter had returned home rather suddenly, as the elder lady said "from a sense of duty;" and now Dora was frequently closeted with her cousin, and Lydia was perpetually running across the fields to her aunt's, as if they had affairs of the utmost moment to settle by their united instrumentality.

With regard to the widow herself, and Dora especially, a somewhat remarkable change had taken place since their return home, in relation to the occupancy of their house. It was curious, how they had entered from their journey, warily, and with evidence of considerable dudgeon in their looks, and manners, as if regarding themselves in the light of an injured party. It was

curious, how they had listened to the somewhat exaggerated account which the servants were but too ready to give, evincing their sense of wrong if not of absolute insult and injury, by certain tossings of the head, and other unmistakable indications of anger and contempt; and yet how very short a time it had taken them to become not only reconciled to the disorder to which the house and furniture had been subjected, but actually both amused and interested by the stranger who had unconsciously been the cause of so much apprehension and dismay.

In all probability, it was to some extent owing to the abatement of fever and pain that the stranger himself appeared also changed. The servants had described him as a very frightful looking person, indeed. Dora, from a little peep which she obtained through a partially opened door, pronounced him handsome. The nurses had complained of his irritability and impatience, having construed many sounds which he uttered into very bad language indeed; but their mistress on the first visit which she thought it right to pay to his room, had found him grateful, polite, and quiet as a lamb.

Nor was it long before Dora herself was permitted to be one of his visitors, for this reason—that she could speak and write a little French, and above all things the poor sufferer wanted a letter to be written to his father, in order that he might be made acquainted with the place of his detention, and the cause; not so much on account of any personal uneasiness he might feel, as because there was important business pending, which ought to have been attended to, and for the results of which his father would be impatiently waiting.

Thus Dora was cautiously conducted to the room by her mother, who carefully guarded the interview between the stranger and her daughter by her own presence. Nothing she said could be more respectful and proper than the young man's whole behaviour. He did not tell the mother what a beautiful vision had dawned upon him when her daughter first drew near; nor did he explain exactly why another letter had to be written on the following day, and then a third, and so on. It was astonishing what necessity he found for corresponding with his friends just then.

Yet all this was so natural, reasonable, and

likely, that it excited no suspicion. And so by degrees the little party became used to each other; and wonderfully reconciled the widow and her daughter were—the one pitying the poor young man, and the other both pitying and admiring.

CHAPTER IV.

In all the little domestic and social affairs which, to families so quiet in their habits as those who make up the features of the present picture were just as momentous as the events which move the rest of mankind alternately to joy and sorrow, Rebecca Law the mother, took a kind, but somewhat passive interest, seldom disturbing herself so far as to interfere beyond uttering sometimes a slight remonstrance when she considered any proposition as "*unlikely.*" For that is the Friends' great word, implying something of disapprobation, though not so much as their next word—"*unsuitable.*"

These and many similar expressions are well understood both in import and degree by the Society of Friends; and there are besides certain tones of voice which are used for qualifications yet more delicate and minute. To such intimations of not being exactly one with him in purpose,

Jacob Law had not unfrequently to submit; and seldom more so than when on returning home, he had told what he had done in reference to the coach accident. Rebecca actually lifted up her hands, as she exclaimed "My dear!" in a tone of voice peculiarly expressive of the last degree of wonder, and disapprobation.

It had probably never occurred to the good man, until that moment, that he had done anything either "unlikely or "unsuitable." But from that time there did certainly appear a little sensitiveness about him whenever the subject was discussed; and very glad he seemed to be to fall back upon William Greenfell as being the active partner in the error, if it was one. At the same time, however, it would have been but little in keeping with the general character of Jacob Law, if he had not stood manfully by what he believed to be right. He was, therefore, fully prepared to defend the act itself before the whole world as perfectly unavoidable; only in private he sometimes flinched with a little show of nervousness, when people talked about the consequences, or joked as they sometimes had done, about the liberty taken with his sister's house.

In the same manner, though by no means to

the same extent, Rebecca had been disposed to question the desirableness of bringing the young Mansfields so near, on account of her own dear children, the older young woman being as she considered by no means a consistent character. This suggestion, however, was pretty quickly silenced by Jacob Law exclaiming, in a tone which settled most things—"My dear, she is dying! And as to the other sister, I think her one of the best girls I ever knew. I only wish our Lyddy was as good. Besides which, I believe Gilbert himself is coming to reside here."

"That makes a difference," observed Rebecca, and there the matter ended; for seldom did the wife proceed so far as to any direct dispute with her husband; but rather left what she did not quite like, as she left most things, to be charged, in the blame attaching to them, upon others not upon herself.

In short, it must be confessed that the walk of this good woman was a very narrow one. To keep herself and her children from all contact with evil, appeared to be the chief object of her domestic solicitude. Beyond this, she lived a kind of abstracted spiritual life, with which no one ventured to interfere, a life which to her was paramount

in all things, and which consequently absorbed almost the whole of her being. Out of this inner spiritual existence, she was accustomed from time to time to deliver a sort of oracular warning against evil, or an encouragement to good, the good and the evil being both confined within certain limitations which she was accustomed to define by the word *truth*. This word, of momentous and most comprehensive import, was ever on her lips. Sometimes, as applied by her, it meant an inward teacher of infallible certainty; sometimes the Holy Scriptures; sometimes the testimony which early Friends had borne to certain articles of belief, or peculiarities of practice; sometimes those articles themselves; and sometimes it meant the feelings with which her own mind was impressed on some especial occasion. At all times, whatever might be the message she might have to deliver, it was conveyed as arising immediately out of this spiritual consciousness of the requirements of truth, and it was accompanied by that solemn tone and manner which admitted neither of inquiry nor explanation. Her words, which were very slow, and uttered with a kind of monotonous cadence, were always preceded by that peculiar silence which has the effect of imposing stillness and re-

straint upon the most volatile, or gay; so that on no occasion could any response or comment be ventured upon by those who were present during these addresses.

The moment this silence began, which was always at the time of morning and evening reading of the Scriptures, and occasionally at other times of the day, all was hushed, not an enquiring look was ever directed to the speaker when any words were said; but rather a general inclination of the head forwards, and depression of the eyes, as if in reverential acknowledgment of the communication thus made being not the words of man's wisdom, but rather utterances of the Spirit designed for immediate application to the hearts of one or more of the individuals present.

It is no unfrequent thing for such utterances to be conveyed, in language clearly and closely applying to some personal case. Sometimes those who are thus addressed have to sit silently, and submissively, while hearing themselves preached *at* in the most pointed manner—their private feelings alluded to—their conflicts described—their resistance to the truth dealt with most unsparingly; or perhaps, on the other hand, a future is propheeied for them, if faithful,

of the most encouraging description, so that their hearts, if susceptible, are greatly refreshed by such occasions, and they go on their way rejoicing.

Indeed it would be difficult to describe the effect produced upon feeling and character by this mode of address, always accompanied by those peculiar silences which are so well adapted to produce grave and impartial inquiries into life and conduct; and beyond this, occasionally the deepest heart-searchings into individual experience, as in the sight of God and not of man. There is sometimes on these occasions something so touching to the feelings which have already been excited by close convictions of duty neglected, opportunity abused, or time to be redeemed, that no other form of worship can, perhaps, in this respect, admit of comparison with that of the Friends. As regards the callous and the worldly, the case may be widely different, and especially with those who are bent upon a career of vice—corrupt—impassioned—stained with guilt. It would scarcely seem enough for such to be reminded now and then, in this quiet way, of those little deviations from the path of truth, against which the denunciations of the friends are chiefly directed.

Characters of this kind, and especially those who are essentially worldly, if accustomed to the habits of the society from childhood, will join in this accustomed outward calm and stillness, listening, not unfrequently, with folded hands and looks directed to the ground, with as much appearance of willingness to be instructed or rebuked, as if they had really a heart-interest in the matter; so that a stranger might sit down with them in their private as well as public meetings, week after week, and year after year, without the slightest suspicion that they were less irreproachable in conduct than the most modest and subdued in look and manner.

Any little deviation in external matters, such as the coats which had lately been introduced at the Grange, seems to awaken immediately the most alarming suspicions. Otherwise all looks safe and right, so long as regular attendance on occasions of worship is maintained, with decorous behaviour at all times. This being the case, all is taken for granted to be right, until some terrible outbreak or breach of the moral law discloses the fatal secret which can no longer be concealed.

It was in this manner that the young men connected with the Grange had so long carried on

practices which the heads of the household would have been far from approving, but which they never thought of suspecting, until the putting on of those unfortunate coats. Since then the case had been widely altered. Robert Moreton, though daily improving in his business habits and qualifications, had otherwise fallen very low in the esteem of his employer; and as for poor Reuben, he was alternately suspected by his father, and wept over by his mother, until, as he said, he might as well be as bad as he could be, for no one could think worse of him then than they thought now.

Altogether Reuben was in a most precarious state with regard to his conduct and general character. He had nothing to care for now, he often said; and he was exactly of that disposition which either is, or imagines itself, capable of being helped on to anything right and good, but wholly incapable of attaining the same end without help. Thus he was living on from day to day, idle as the wind, and almost as often turned from one quarter to another—wholly at sea, without sail or rudder—a source of anxiety to others—a mystery—a torment to himself. Sometimes he was wild and merry to the extreme of violence,

at other times depressed and wretched, and then so mad and reckless in his way of talking, that he frightened his sisters, and even made Robert apprehensive lest he should do some desperate act by which he might be thrown adrift upon the world, and thus deprived of all the advantage and security afforded by a respectable home and family connections.

It was in this state that a sudden shock fell upon him, precisely of that nature which he was least able to bear with equanimity. No one would have previously believed that the circumstance by which it was caused would have produced more than a transient emotion. Perhaps he would not have believed it himself. Still he was about as unreasoning a creature as any one could well be who possessed an average share of common sense; and such being the case, no one ever knew how he would be affected by circumstances. No one knew either what castles he might have been building in the air—what pictures painting in his imaginary future.

Shortly after the arrival of the Mansfields at the cottage, Lydia, in a call she made there one day, glanced accidentally over a newspaper which lay upon the table.

"William Greenfell supplies us with that paper weekly," said Margaret. "Is it not kind and thoughtful of him?"

"Very," said Lydia, rather shortly; and she continued looking at the paper, perhaps not very well knowing what she was about, until, amongst the marriages, at which young ladies do occasionally glance, she found a statement of one having taken place which she had had some reason to expect, though the suspicion had been confined to her sister and herself.

"I find something here," she said, at length, "which I should like to show my sister. May I borrow this paper for a little while?"

"Yes, certainly," Margaret replied, "for as long as you like. We have quite done with it."

Lydia folded up the paper, placed it in a covered basket in which she had brought some fruit for the invalid, and then hastened immediately to find Susannah.

Alone in their chamber, the two sisters examined the paper, and talked the matter over.

"It is better he should know it, said both."

"Much better," Lydia repeated, "and I really don't think he will care much about it now."

"I am not quite certain of that," observed Susannah.

"I think Jane might have written to tell us she was going to be married," said Lydia.

"Perhaps it was more prudent not to do so," said Susannah. "There would have been something like indelicacy to my feelings in opening the channel of communication again, after it had been so long closed, especially on the occasion of her marriage with another person.

"I wonder who he is?" said Lydia.

And so the sisters went on, surmising and consulting, until at last it was agreed between them that the paper should be laid upon Reuben's table when he went to bed that night, so that whatever he might feel, whether much, or little, might be got over by himself, without observation or remark.

It was not quite easy, however, to dismiss from their minds all apprehension respecting the result; for many things had occured lately of a nature calculated to awaken painful anxiety respecting their brother's personal habits, as well as general state of mind and feeling. He was not like himself, Lydia often said. Susannah made few remarks, but she had a deeper insight into the real

cause of that change which was gradually transforming their brother into what Susannah shuddered but to contemplate even in idea.

Harassed by the same anxieties, and with his feelings often deeply shocked and pained, Robert Moreton had sometimes communicated freely with Susannah on this subject, and both had agreed upon adopting a variety of precautionary plans, in the first instance to prevent what was actually wrong, and in the next to prevent its disclosure before others.

This was often extremely difficult; but Susannah's habitual tact and prudence in so many other kinds of management rendered her the more skilful in this, and between them a system of secret intelligence had for some time been kept up, which every day seemed to become less and less likely to ensure the desired results.

On the part of Robert this brotherly solicitude was accompanied by a faithful dealing, such as all true friendship demands; but which, seldom very acceptable, was in this instance resented sometimes with passionate indignation, sometimes with defiance and contempt; so that little good seemed likely to be effected either by argument, or persuasion.

"We must wait," was Susannah's often repeated remark, when Robert described to her how his well-meant interference had been rejected. To some extent it was unquestionably well to wait, but there were days in store for her, when a hard lesson would have to be learned in the practice of other Christian virtues besides those of passive submission.

When night came, the two sisters listened with every faculty alive; for their brother's room was immediately over that in which they slept, and they had carried out their project of placing the the paper on his table.

"I really don't think he will care," said Lydia repeatedly, endeavouring to fortify herself in a conviction, which after all was not thoroughly a conviction either. "I have never," she continued "heard him make the least allusion to Jane for some time past."

"That is no sign of forgetfulness," observed the other sister, a little more deeply read in such matters. "But hark! He is going up into his room, we shall soon perhaps be able to form some idea of how he takes it."

"He has gone up with a brisk step, at any rate," said Lydia.

"Poor fellow!" sighed her sister.

"He is very still," said Lydia. "I dare say he is reading the paper."

"Did'st thou mark the passage?"

"Oh! yes, with double strokes. He could not miss it."

"Hark!"

The sisters stood aghast, grasping each other by the arm. After a long silence there had burst from Reuben's room a laugh so loud, and wild, that it might have been the outbreak of some maniac's frenzy. And all the while the sisters stood gazing at each other with looks of terror, not knowing what might follow.

After awhile there was a grating as of some one grinding the heel of a boot upon the floor; and then in a few minutes they could distinctly hear their brother spring upon his bed with unusual energy, and violence, and again all was still.

Long, long, they listened, wondering and afraid, but the stillmess continued, so at last they took heart, believing their brother must have fallen asleep, and so hoping that after all the case might not be so bad as their fears had represented. Thus they talked, and thus they comforted each other,

until at last, as their most painful apprehensions died away, their own eyes were sealed in slumber, and they became insensible to everything except a kind of fear, which, in the mind of Susannah, shaped itself into a horrid dream.

Whether from this, or from hearing some sharp strange sound, Susannah did not know, but starting up a little after midnight, she felt sure there were unusual noises in the house, and especially the clash of a door closing violently. Her sister was happily still asleep, and it was so much her habit to appropriate care and trouble to herself, that she moved stealthily about, in order not to wake her sister; and as there was now a full moon shining clearly, she felt no need of any other light to guide her about the house. Her first object was to go to her brother's room. Here she found the door open, and the chamber empty, he was evidently gone, as she had apprehended. The torn paper was lying in a thousand fragments on the floor. Susannah gathered them up, and then went silently down the stairs, observing as she went that all the doors through which her brother had passed were standing open. Even the outer door had only fallen back with its own weight. It was left unfastened. Indeed everything indicated

the greatest haste, and determination on the part of him who had gone out.

Happily that part of the house in which the father and mother slept was so distant, and separate from this, that there was every probability they had not been disturbed. The servants also were in that quarter; and after Susannah had listened attentively for some time, she had the satisfaction of believing that all the household except herself were happily unconscious of any ground for those fearful apprehensions which crowded thick and fast upon her own mind, now that she had time to think, and had ascertained with certainty that her brother had left the house.

Instead of yielding entirely to this train of feeling, Susannah began to consider what, under present circumstances, it would be best to do. Immediately she recollected Robert Moreton, and, had just risen with the intention of proceeding to his room, when she heard his voice upon the stairs speaking to her in a kind of loud whisper, for he too was anxious not to disturb the household. He too had heard strange sounds, and being always apprehensive about poor Reuben, had been to his room in order to see that all was right there. The next thing he saw was Susannah standing in

the hall in the clear moonlight, and to her he addressed himself, afraid even to ask what was the the matter.

The case was soon explained, and without waiting to be asked, Robert proposed to set out in search of Reuben, though well aware that to force his presence upon him at such a time would be to incur his most violent displeasure, if not actually to be the cause of his plunging still more resolutely into guilt and shame.

"I will do the best I can" said Robert, pausing in the door-way. "I think I know his temper well enough to prevent my doing harm instead of good; but do not be disappointed if I return without having been able in any way to serve or save him."

"At least speak to the people, wherever he may be, to take care of him." said Susannah.

"That is just what I am going for," replied Robert; "and it is almost all that I dare hope. If he be where I suppose, the people know him well, and are always kind to him—a little too kind, I fear."

With that he left the house, Susannah placing in his hands a key with which he might let himself in at another door; and then, after making every

bolt and bar secure, she returned quietly to her own room, well pleased to find her sister still asleep, and unconscious of all the sad realities which had been transpiring.

It was impossible for Susannah to sleep. She listened long, and faithfully, but there was no sound of hope, or comfort—no returning step, and the light of morning found her unsatisfied, and unrefreshed.

When the family met together at the breakfast table, there was still that peculiar outward calm prevailing over all, which to a stranger would have afforded evidence that all had passed a peaceful night. Jacob Law, it is true, was more silent and absorbed in thought than usual; Robert Moreton looked careworn, and harassed; and Susannah remarkably pale. Reuben's accustomed seat was vacant, and no one ventured to ask why. His mother had not left her room, and Lydia, who alone of all the party present did not know the cause, still deemed it best to offer no remark. It was a circumstance by no means of rare occurrence, and whatever might be the reason for his absence now, all seemed to feel it was no subject to be talked about.

Susannah had kept her own counsel in talking

with her sister; and Lydia thought it no unlikely thing that after reading the paper on the previous night, her brother should not like to meet his family lest some unwelcome comment should be made. An early interview had been sought with Robert Moreton, from whom Sussannah had learned as much as he thought fit to tell; and from some slight hints let fall by her father, she concluded that he had been made acquainted with the whole.

It would, in fact, have been no easy matter now to keep poor Reuben's secret. For some time Robert had done this faithfully, and perseveringly, though wondering almost every day that it was not discovered; and at the same time maintaining his resolution, that when no longer possible to be concealed, he would speak to Jacob Law freely and fully on the subject, offering every excuse for Reuben which his peculiar character and circumstances allowed.

These, in Robert's mind were not few, but still he doubted whether any extenuation which he might bring forward, would be available in the mind of a strictly judging parent. In this respect, he was not able to do justice to Jacob Law. He had seen him so often impatient, and almost harsh

when vexed with the more trivial failings of his son, that it was not easy to understand how he should be more lenient in greater things. The fact, however, was, that Jacob Law was now too deeply pained to feel any sensation approaching to that of anger. He had lately been often struck with his son's strangeness of manner, and had not been altogether without suspicion of the cause, but it had never entered his mind to conceive anything so terrible as the account which he had this morning heard in a conversation held at an early hour with Robert Moreton; and while he looked at the facts in every point of view, and while the apprehension grew upon him that his poor boy would be lost:—lost irrevocably, and eternally, he experienced no tendency to impatience—nothing but the most poignant grief, and the deepest humiliation.

Still he was silent. It was not a case he thought for women to be made acquainted with; and he consequently agreed with Robert Moreton that together they would take such steps as might be advisable, with as little exposure as the case might permit.

CHAPTER V.

A confidential clerk connected with the business at the Grange, and residing on the premises, had been let into the secret of Reuben's infatuation; and on the present occasion his services were called into requisition in the way of receiving and protecting the unfortunate youth, so as to keep him from more open exposure.

All necessary arrangements having, therefore, been made to meet the present emergency, the next important question was, how to prevent the recurrence of the same disgraceful conduct in future. The business in which Jacob Law had been so long, and so successfully engaged, was that of a brewer. It had descended to him from a worthy parent, and in all probability had never once been associated in his mind with the slightest idea of its being any other than a lawful and most respectable calling. He knew it was conducted

honestly and honourably; and as for its associations, and the abuses which he knew to be connected with some of its remoter branches, they were no more chargeable, he thought, to him, than any other of the sins of the community. Thus, for the present he was to some extent satisfied that his poor boy was taken care of; and thus without any outward evidence of any peculiar disturbance of mind, he fell in again with the accustomed routine of social and business affairs.

Lydia, too, was in some degree relieved from anxiety when told that her brother had withdrawn himself for a while, not liking to meet the family immediately after the intelligence which had so unexpectedly reached him. There was no violation of truth in this, though it was far from being the whole truth; and Lydia was just at the present time less disposed to pursue the subject, because of that secret intelligence, of so interesting a nature, which existed between her and her cousin Dora.

Almost every morning Dora was early at the Grange, sometimes, we are ashamed to say, before Lydia was half awake. Each day seemed to bring some fresh development of interest, for,

of course, two young ladies situated as they were, would persist in believing that the foreign gentleman was some prince in disguise—some hero escaped from insult and injustice; or at least some noble patriot deeply pledged to maintain the rights and the liberties of his country. It was impossible to believe him an ordinary man, with that strange look and language, and that costume so becoming, and so little like what the young ladies had ever seen before; though it consisted of nothing more than a cap, and loose gown of rather handsome material.

These conjectures were the more likely to occur to two romantic girls at the period of which we write, when intercourse with the continent, and acquaintance with foreign manners, were much more rare than now. And even had these been more frequent throughout the country at large, the habits of the Society of Friends were so retired and exclusive, as seldom to admit of association with strangers, in any of their domestic or social relations. Hence the wonder, the interest, and perhaps the admiration of these two girls, enhanced by the really handsome face and figure of the foreigner, and also by a kind of mystery about him which manifested itself in

an extraordinary impatience to proceed on his journey, as if some event of the greatest moment was dependent upon his movements. There was also a secrecy attaching to some of his affairs which rendered him unwilling to trust the fair hand of his amanuensis beyond the merest scraps of common-place intelligence communicated to his father and a few family connections. Beyond this it was evident there were matters of deep moment, upon which he was so anxious to make some communication, that on many occasions he was detected in the act of attempting to write with his left hand; but as the injuries he had received extended also to the shoulder on that side, he was strictly forbidden by his doctor to persevere in this difficult occupation.

Out of these facts and many others, obvious only to the penetration of young ladies, Dora and her cousin had constructed a very pretty little romance which, however, had the happy quality of being able to change its aspect with any new development of character and circumstance. The means of communication, too, were not the most definite and certain; for to say the truth of Dora's French, it was pervaded by a certain vagueness of meaning, as well as understanding,

which produced the agreeable effect of admitting almost any idea which the pretty talker and listener might choose to entertain. In writing she was a little more correct, but in gathering the meaning of what was said, her imagination was a little too active, and her anticipation of wonder and excitement too intense to admit of much regard being paid to the grammatical construction of sentences, or the true meaning of words.

Nor was it possible in this respect to derive help from other quarters. William Greenfell had entirely ceased to make one of the party, nobody could imagine why; the widow was totally ignorant of any language but her own; and even Lydia, though lately admitted to share in the society and conversation of the stranger, was too slightly acquainted with the mysteries of foreign language to be able to render much assistance. Under these circumstances it became a necessary, and by no means an unpleasant task, to teach the stranger to speak English, of which, however, he was not wholly ignorant, though but little accustomed to join in English conversation. Lydia could assist in this, and perhaps there could not easily have been found a more agreeably in-

terested little party than that which now so often occupied the pretty drawing-room, where Dora's skill and taste had left nothing to be wished for in the way of embellishment and beauty.

It must have been a very urgent call of business that would have the power to hasten any young gentleman away from such society, in such a place; or he must have possessed a very callous and insensible nature who would have desired to escape. By degrees these fascinations began to tell powerfully upon Carl Rosen. He was but young, though entrusted with affairs of consequence; and perhaps his weakness of resolution might in part be attributable to the weakness of his shattered frame. At all events, he did not appear so eager and impatient to be well, as in the earlier stages of his convalescence. The doctor thought him recovering faster than he could himself be made to believe, and even ventured to suggest a little more use of the disabled limbs.

In attempting to walk, however, it was highly important that for the present the invalid should be assisted. There was no man upon the premises. To call in the support of a female servant did not seem exactly right; so with a little blushing, and

laughing, Dora offered her services, ard sometimes when Lydia was present her arm was also in requisition as an additional support, and thus the invalid was conducted along the garden walks, a little further every day, and only a very little.

What were the secret feelings of Carl, it would have been difficult to say. He certainly looked like a very happy man, and he had a right to do so, except sometimes when a letter reached him. Then indeed the old trouble seemed to come again, and he would knit his brow, and bite his lip, and lose himself in reverie, for the remainder of the day.

"I wonder what it is," the cousins often said to each other.

"Perhaps some political disaster," suggested Lydia.

"Ah!" "exclaimed Dora," I knew from the first he was a patriot. I wonder whether he has ever been in battle. I would ask him, but when anything relating to his own circumstances is introduced, I think a cloud comes over him."

"I wish I knew;" said Lydia, and thus the girls would talk, and wonder, Dora being always a little more free of speech, as well as more suggestive than her cousin; but Lydia was by far

the deepest thinker, and perhaps the wildest dreamer of the two.

It was on the morning which has already been described, when the other members of the family at the Grange had enough of private care and trouble to keep them silent, that Dora arrived at a somewhat later hour than usual, and flew up with her cousin into a private room, where they were accustomed to carry on their most confidential intercourse.

A letter had come, Dora said, of more than common importance; "And, do thee know?" she added, "I believe he is a conspirator!"

"I don't care if he is," said Lydia; and then they entered more fully into the grounds of this belief.

"He is passionate and impatient of control—that I see clearly enough," observed Dora, "I never heard him so violent as he was last night. To be sure, I could not gather exactly what he said, for he spoke in German; but of this I feel certain, that he is most indignant about some injury or wrong, for he apologized to us afterwards by saying something about a villain. He even searched in the dictionary to find a name bad enough, but we could not agree upon the right

one, so he grew very cross again; and Mamma was quite frightened. Before we parted, however, he made another apology, as he stood with Mamma's hand in his; and oh! Liddy, the tears were in his eyes, and he *did* look so interesting!"

Lydia who had looked earnestly into her cousin's face when she began this little story, now cast her eyes upon the ground, not without some fear that if she raised them, they would betray a tearful sympathy with those of the interesting Carl. She spoke not, for she had lately become very silent when her cousin rambled on, as she often did, in rather an extraordinary way about the mysterious stranger. "How could she talk so?" was Lydia's secret exclamation sometimes, when her cousin was gone; and then she would fall into a reverie so deep, that nothing in the domestic affairs of the household had the power to awaken her attention, unless called to some particular duty by her sister.

What was she dreaming of, the foolish girl!

Lydia had always been addicted to dreaming, and she had imagined strange things sometimes, and had seen pictures which filled the chambers of her imagination with strange imagery; but never until now had she found a living object

around which to wreathe the tendrils of her fancy. She had undoubtedly seen those whom she admired as much, whom her judgment perhaps more approved, and in whose real worth she had more implicit confidence, because she knew them better. But what was worth to the imagination of a romantic girl in comparison with mystery? What was known and tested excellence in comparison with novelty? What was all which could be said in commendation of human character and conduct in comparison with that heroism which she was determined to associate with this new star just rising above her horizon.

The former qualities were, no doubt, what every one in their sober senses most valued; but they were not the materials out of which to fabricate waking dreams. No; that foreign tongue, and still more foreign manner—that look so gentle, yet at times so passionate, and proud—the lisping of those few English words—and, above all, that loving, trusting spirit, which could ask, as well as do, a kindness—that frank, brotherly affection manifested in a thousand pleasant ways to which all the men with whom Lydia had ever associated were perfectly strangers—each and all of these, though by no means the highest recom-

mendations in themselves, had yet the effect of imparting a kind of fascination to the stranger, against which Lydia's tender heart was by no means proof; though she had no idea in cultivating this acquaintance of more than amusing and being amused in return. She went to her Aunt Greenfell's to help her cousin to pass the time more cheerfully, and to prevent her being left too much alone with the foreign gentleman. This, in the first instance, was her reason for going; but she soon went because she found it extremely difficult to keep away.

Something there was, too, in the manner of Carl towards herself, when they became better acquainted, which had the effect of drawing her more to him than she would once have thought possible. He often said she was like his own sister—so like that he called her by the same name—"Louise," and would sometimes treat her with a kind of brotherly familiarity, which was, at the same time, accompanied with so much flattering politeness, that it could not fail to please. With Dora he was less familiar,—sometimes less complimentary. Occasionally, too, a kind of nervous hesitation took possession of him when he addressed himself to Dora; but with Lydia he

was always perfectly at ease, and could ask of her many little kindnesses which, if Dora offered, he would either accept with embarassment, or modestly decline.

"Ah!" thought Lydia, "He likes me to do little services for him best. He may not consider me so pretty as Dora, but I think—"

We will not tell what Lydia thought, nor how many little bonds of union there grew between her and Carl, under the plea of brotherly and sisterly feeling. One there was, especially, respecting which she enjoyed a little triumph over her cousin. Lydia was passionately fond of music, and had a naturally good ear, and fine taste. The invalid had lately begun to amuse himself by singing, in a sort of suppressed tone, when he was alone; and being solicited by the young ladies, had occasionally indulged them with some of the popular airs of his native country. It is just possible that time sometimes hung rather heavily upon his hands, notwithstanding the many privileges he enjoyed; but still, from some cause or other, he evinced no real or lasting desire to be gone, only now and then fretted a little under his captivity, and then gave himself up again entirely to the enjoyment which it evidently afforded.

Lydia thought she had never heard anything so delightful as that low soft singing in the dark hour, when they sat gazing into the fire. Carl was delighted, too, that she could appreciate his taste in music; and her silent but deep enthusiasm he could also well understand. Dora was pleased, but nothing more. Hence, there arose a sympathy of feeling between two of the party, in which the other had but little share.

Thus listening, and thus dreaming, Lydia fell insensibly into that snare which few sensitive natures have entirely escaped. Like others thus entangled, she never told how she was caught. There was, in fact, nothing to tell; only that the world had suddenly grown more beautiful to her, and happiness more rich, and all things more attractive which led in one direction—and one alone. It was only an episode in her existence—nothing worthy of a name—the very thing which, more than others, excites mockery and laughter. How much better, therefore, that it should be, as it almost always is, locked in the inmost heart, secure alike from scrutiny, contempt, and blame.

But though all can laugh at this early folly by which certain periods of youth are peculiarly beset; though the disciplinarian can frown, and

the satirist can smile, we fancy there are few things which the human heart has cognizance of, in which it remains itself more innocent and pure. Ever afterwards in life there is some selfish calculation, some suspicion, or some reserve, arising out of interest, pride, or worldliness. In this how free is fancy from all mean or grovelling considerations! The castles in the air thus raised may be utterly baseless, but they are alike noble in structure, pure in material, and beautiful in design. Nothing in the common course of existence will ever be more so.

No, laugh as we will, those early dreams supply both the seed and the garniture of all the poetry of our lives. Ever does the painter, no less than the poet, recur to them for images of beauty; and when music fills the soul, and fires the eye, or bathes the cheek with tears, it is only because it brings to us again some tone of tenderness, or paints again some well remembered object belonging to our early dreams.

The less time, the less disposition, the less heart there is remaining to us for this early exercise of fancy, and of feeling, the less redolent will be our poetry of the sweet perfumes of the past; and, consequently, the less power will be

asserted by poetry over the human soul. We see something of this in the present day, and we feel it too. It is not altogether that our poets will not, or cannot write, but that there is between those who sing, and those who listen, no common store to draw from of those associations which made the day dreams of our youth more beautiful than any after reality can be.

People say this is no subject for regret, that we want only the substantial and the real. It may be so; but when the substantial and real degenerate into the material, as they are so prone to do, and when all but that is disregarded by a nation—a people—a community; what, if that nation be ours, will become of the more ethereal portion of our nature, that portion which never was designed for imprisonment in walls of clay, nor bondage under chains of iron? The danger is that even in our religion we should cease to worship only where we have all the external conveniences for worship, and to pray only with the multitude when we may be seen of men to pray.

But to return to the simpler matters of our story. Lydia Law, as might have been anticipated, received a little caution from her father

against being too familiar with that strange young man at her Aunt Greenfell's. "It was all very well," he said, "that he should be taken care of when helpless, and suffering, but to seek his society was a very different matter."

Lydia excused herself, while blushing deeply, by saying that she should never have thought of going so much, but that her aunt had begged she would do so, in order to prevent her cousin from "being left so much alone with —— with ——."

Lydia did not know what to call the stranger. To her he had unconsciously come to be "Carl—poor Carl!"—perhaps mentally, "*dear* Carl." But she hesitated when another designation had to be found, and thus grew more and more embarrassed, until her father could not help perceiving her confusion, and this made him the more urgent that the intimacy should be discontinued.

Had Jacob Law proposed to himself some private plan for enhancing the interest already excited in his daughter's feelings, he could not have chosen one more sure. Lydia did, however, so far conform to her father's wishes, as to discontinue her visits for some days; and she discovered other reasons for doing so besides the duty of

obedience, in the state of her own heart, which alarmed her no little by the pain it gave her, when the time of her accustomed walk across the fields passed over, and she did not go. A good deal of this pain, it is true, she attributed to the want which Carl would feel of her ever ready help. "Now," she thought, "he will be walking in the garden, and Dora is so little, and her arm so low for him to lean upon. Now he will be singing in the dark hour, and Dora never knows one tune from another."

Such was Lydia's tender solicitude about the happiness and welfare of Carl, as she calculated what would be the occupation or amusement of every hour; and all the while the interest and the pleasure of these secret thoughts were encreased a hundred fold by the firm conviction that he would feel her absence a privation, and perhaps wish for her as much as she wished to be again by his side. Sometimes too she pleased herself by picturing his joyous welcome when she should again make one of the little party, for there was a frankness and cordiality in his expressions in connection with her, which sometimes went beyond all reasonable bounds. To a more direct observer this might perhaps have

seemed like a natural way of throwing off such feelings as he dared not, or could not, manifest in any other manner.

Not many days, however, had passed under this restraint, before Dora arrived at the Grange with a countenance on which was written the profoundest interest. There was no tendency to laughter now. Scarcely to the accustomed rapid, and eager talk. Lydia must go up stairs with her immediately, and the door of the room must be shut very fast, and close.

"My darling, Liddy," she exclaimed when this was done; and throwing her arms around her cousin, she added, with something like a sob—"What shall I do?"

"I don't know;" said Lydia, in a state of great excitement—"What is it, dear?"

"Oh, Liddy! I dare not—cannot tell thee."

"Don't be afraid of telling me anything."

"Well, then—Oh! no. I cannot say it—indeed I cannot."

"Yes, do."

"Do thee know, then, I think Carl loves me."

"Dora!"

"I do, indeed!"

Lydia had involuntarily started back, and she now found herself making rather determined efforts to disentangle herself from her cousin's embrace; but Dora was too much occupied with her own thoughts to notice what she did. Hanging down her head, and actually dropping a tear or two upon Lydia's burning cheek, she went on to say—"I don't know whatever I *shall* do; I am so frightened."

"But art thou quite sure?" Lydia asked, for she had considerable misgivings in her own mind. "Did he speak to thee in French?"

"Partly."

"Then it is just possible thou might have misunderstood him."

"Oh, no! I could not do that.—He looked so. But he is going to write a long letter. He says I shall know everything about his family, and connections. Oh, Liddy! suppose he should really be a prince!"

"I don't think he is that;" said Lydia, still in great amazement, and still secretly holding by the suspicion that her cousin had deceived herself.

"I shall soon know, however," Dora continued; and now her face was all smiles and ani-

mation again, and she could even enter upon other topics, though all bore some relation to the one point of interest.

Under this new excitement, it was but natural that she should soon wish to be gone. She did not ask Lydia to return with her—perhaps she did not very much wish for her company just then. So away she went, nodding, and smiling, and looking a good deal like a butterfly on a summer's day, as it flits from flower to flower.

Silent and deep was the musing fit into which Lydia fell after her cousin had left her. It threatened to be interminable in duration; for, though physically restless, and disposed to move from place to place, trying every now and then a new position, as if in the hope of finding one more easy than the last, there was evidently a concentration of her thoughts upon one point, which rendered her incapable of admitting any other. At last the dinner hour arrived, and Susannah went up stairs to adjust her cap, before the dreamer was so far awake as to be restored to any consciousness of present things.

The remainder of that day was passed by Lydia in a state of bewilderment. She answered mechanically when spoken to; and as she evinced no

sign of sorrow, or emotion of any kind, no member of her family was aware of any change having passed over the aspect of her world.

On the following morning Dora came again; her countenance was really grave—perhaps even a little pouting and pettish, as if a slight disappointment had dimmed the lustre of her previous hopes. But still beneath the surface there lurked so bright a gleam of satisfaction, that her sparkling eyes bore witness to her joy, even while her lips still spoke of apprehension, terror, and all sorts of shocking things.

As soon as the two confidants were safely closeted, Dora drew forth a letter written in a large clear hand, not altogether unlike a schoolboys.

"Carl has been many days," she said, "in writing this, with a dictionary and grammar beside him. But it is at last in English, plain, and unmistakeable enough — quite a business-like downright offer. I should never have expected such a thing from him."

"And his family and circumstances?" inquired Lydia.

Dora's countenance fell. "He gives me quite

a long history," she said; but here again she paused.

Lydia was all impatience, for now the great mystery was about at last to be solved; and, though it might be nothing to her personally, her fancy lingered fondly over the pictures she had drawn. "What is it then?" she asked again.

"Well, do thee know," said Dora, "he is only a provision merchant after all."

Here then was a conclusion to the whole matter. It was impossible for Lydia not to smile as her eye was caught by the disappointed look of her fair cousin. But they were soon both grave enough, for there was now a dreadful matter to discuss—no less than the circumstances attendant upon *marrying out*, which necessarily included the opposition of those who had the right to oppose; the grief of those who were most closely connected; and the surprise and disapprobation of Friends in general.

CHAPTER VI.

In making her calculations upon the consequences necessarily resulting from so bold a project as that of marrying out of the Society, it was rather curious that Dora never seemed to draw any other conclusion from the making of the offer than that a marriage must ensue. The fact was, Carl Rosen found but little difficulty in obtaining a favourable answer from the young lady herself; with her mother the case was different.

The widow Greenfell either had been, or chose to appear, exceedingly blind in this matter, sheltering herself, no doubt, from any painful sense of responsibility, under the conviction that whatever might occur, the blame belonged to her brother Jacob, not to her, in first placing the young foreigner beneath her roof.

It is quite possible too, that the widow, like the younger ladies, had been a little won over by the

young man's amiable and gentlemanly manners, to say nothing of certain easy and pleasant compliments which he had the art of throwing in on all appropriate occasions, and which none of the party were at all in the habit of hearing from any members of their own community. At all events the mother never seemed to lay the subject at all to heart, until the real and *bonâ fide* offer was made; and then the fear of blame attaching to herself appeared to be the only real cause of regret, for Carl had prudently refrained from speaking of her daughter being taken away from her, so far as to reside in a foreign country. He even held out a hope of settling in London; and made a half promise, that if his father's consent could be obtained, that should be his future home.

And then he spoke of pleasant family meetings which, under such circumstances, could be so easily enjoyed, and of visits to his fatherland, taking care, on every occasion, to tell how much he loved the Society of Friends, admired their habits, and approved their principles; and it was very natural just then that he should do so, for gratitude, independently of any more tender emotion, had rendered him particularly suscepti-

ble of agreeable impressions with regard to the family from whom he had received such kind and generous treatment.

The gratitude was sincere and deep; and if the partiality he expressed was only the effect of an excited imagination, it was sustained and confirmed by the most agreeable associations which it had ever been his happiness to experience. How then, even in the secret of his heart, was he to dissever these associations from an actual approval of principle, and affection for a class; especially at the time when his mind was least likely to distinguish, with philosophical precision, the exact boundary line of truth? Thus, in pressing his suit with the mother, Carl was not positively insincere, though he did go to considerable lengths in strengthening his persuasions by all that was likely to be most agreeable to listen to, and most propitious to the happiness of the future.

Had it been possible for a stranger and a foreigner like Carl Rosen to understand into what a dilemma he would be likely to plunge the family to whom he was so deeply indebted, or in other words, what consequences would be likely to result from his proposal of marriage, he might

have hesitated before venturing upon so bold a declaration. To him it probably appeared the most simple and natural thing in the world, that two young people, mutually pleased with each other, should enter into the closest and tenderest relation for life. Little, indeed, did he apprehend the state of mind and feeling with which this step would be regarded by a large circle of family and social connections.

For himself, he knew the honourable and respectable nature of his part in the compact—he thought he knew—what man does not?—his own power and will to make the happiness of any woman who might regard him with affection; and what beyond this could there be to object to or to fear? Alas! He little knew what private consultations—what apprehensions—what difficulties, real and imaginary—what concern—what absolute distress, had to be gone through, especially by the family at the Grange, for to Jacob Law in particular the thing appeared absurd—impossible—not to be thought of for a moment.

Perhaps, in his capacity of overseer in the meeting, and of disciplinarian in general, he felt rather sensitively his own share in the matter, so far as having placed the young people in cir-

cumstances of domestic association; and for this reason, as well as for many others, it might be that he set his face against the connexion with a determination which scarcely admitted of the subject being freely and candidly discussed.

Happily for Carl, he had left the scene of dismay before these circumstances were disclosed. His own part being sucessfully accomplished, he felt now, for the first time, both at liberty and able to pursue the purpose for which he had left home; and notwithstanding all he had suffered he set out upon his journey a much happier man than ever in his life before.

But before this journey was undertaken, and while the different events here described were transpiring, there was one member of the family at the Grange whose state of mind, though admitting of no description, had prompted him to form a plan so bold, and desperate, that he scarcely could arrive at any final determination upon it, without at least one confidant and adviser.

On recovering the full possession of his senses, Reuben Law very naturally felt a strong objection to join again the family party by whom he was conscious that he must be looked upon with disgust, if not with abbhorrence. He did not want

to make confessions without assurances of penitence, and regret, and that he had not come to yet. He did not want to act the hypocrite, yet how could he sit down as one of that quiet circle, with his mind so full of burning thoughts, his temper so fierce and wild, and yet so desperate a course before him in the future, as that which often stared him in the face, as the only possible one to him. No. He wanted to be away—so far away that his family would never have to blush for him —never hear of him for years, and then, perhaps he might come back to them an altered character.

While these thoughts were busy in Reuben's mind, there arrived a letter from Paul Rutherford of a more confidential nature than for sometime past. Indeed, the intimacy between them had recently so nearly died away, that their occasional communications were scarcely worthy of the name of correspondence.

Susannah still heard frequently, and as frequently transmitted the information which Paul required, and which was now become so habitual with her, that she regarded it as one of her constant and most familiar duties. Now, however, both she and Reuben were snrprised to learn that Paul was contemplating a journey of some length,

he did not say in what direction, but that he was likely to be absent for some time. In the strictest confidence he told this; and in writing to Susannah he added, that it was entirely an affair of business, though of a delicate and confidential nature; that his father and he had lately been living upon better terms; and that in consequence of the greater trust reposed in him, he had been charged by his father with affairs of considerable importance, which rendered it necessary for him to be frequently in London. Again he alluded to this especial business as requiring the utmost caution, and even secrecy; and for this reason he desired Susannah to communicate to no human being the address which he should give her, and by which she might write to him in London, as he still wished to hear all particulars respecting the proceedings of that young man from Hamburgh.

This part of her letter Susannah kept strictly to herself. She did not like the secrecy. She was distressed at the prospect of the long separation which Paul could speak of so lightly. But, on the other hand, there was a certain kind of pleasure in being entrusted with his secrets; and it was still more pleasant to know that confidence was restored between him and his father, and that

he was becoming essential to him in matters of importance.

While pondering these subjects in her mind, Susannah was sent for to the residence of the clerk, at whose house her brother Reuben still remained. She found him in a state of considerable excitement, and he was not long in explaining to her the cause.

"I am going," said he, "to Layton to see Paul this afternoon. I want to have a good long talk with him."

Susannah ventured to ask what about.

"Well," said Reuben, "I don't care much to stay here. I dare say you would all be very kind to me. It is not that. The fact is, I'm only a trouble and a shame to you; so I'm going to see if Paul can find me some way of getting out of the country for a good while. Now don't look astonished, Susie—still less sorry, for I know very well, and I dare say you know it too, that if I stay here, as I am, I should cause you heavier sorrow than if I should just step out of the world altogether. But that is not the point. I want thee, Susannah, to say to my father and mother that I am gone over to Layton to see Paul. It will seem all right enough to them; and if I see

my way any further, why then I'll write a long letter, and tell them all about it."

"Art thou sure, dear, thou wilt do that?" said Susannah, "and not go away and leave us all——"

She could say no more. The prospect looked so desolate, she was so sorry for poor Reuben, and he was so weak and unsupported, that when she looked into this future for him, she found it impossible to restrain her tears.

"Now that," said Reuben, snatching his sister's hand away from her eyes, "is exactly what I cannot bear. Why, Susie, if I was to give way, I should sit down and cry for a whole year. It won't do—indeed it won't. Who knows but you will be proud of me yet?"

"But why go so far away?" asked his sister.

"Only with Paul," he replied, and Susannah began to feel hopeful again, as her thoughts recurred to those happy times when Reuben and Paul were inseparable friends, and when, in her trusting innocence, she believed that all was well with them.

His confidential interview was at length concluded, as so many others had been, with a demand for money on the brother's part. Indeed, Susannah had lately been reduced to a very scanty

wardrobe, being compelled to eke out old shawls, and dresses, in consequence of having silently, and uncomplainingly, met these demands, to the utmost extent which her means afforded.

That very afternoon Reuben set out for Layton; from whence he promised to write to his sister, whatever his future course might be. Susannah accounted for his absence thus far, and the idea of his being, as her parents imagined, safely again under the protecting care of the Rutherfords, so far assured them, that they felt more at liberty to give their undivided attention to the facts already described, as having taken place beneath the roof of Sister Greenfell.

Susannah also became very naturally interested in this momentous matter; for though Lydia evinced but little disposition to make it the subject of discussion, it was impossible not to experience something like unusual excitement in the prospect of all that would have to be gone through, when Friends should take it up.

"I wonder," exclaimed Dora, oftener than the day, "why one cannot be allowed to get married quietly without all this fuss?"

"Art thou sure it will be a marriage, after all?" suggested Lydia.

"Why not?" exclaimed Dora, with very reasonable indignation.

Susannah answered for her sister, by saying that her father seemed disposed to do all he could to put a stop to the proceedings, and with that object in view, he had hinted the probability of his undertaking a journey to London, to advise the young man.

"Let him go;" said Dora, laughing. "I'm not afraid of the consequences, whatever he may choose to do."

In this manner Dora consoled herself, while her uncle took time to consider how it might be best for him to proceed; and while he did so, the whole party at the Grange were surprised by the appearance of Reuben amongst them after an absence of only two days. All the rest of the family were surprised only at the frank and pleasant manner in which he joined the domestic circle again, as if he had never been separated from it. Susannah alone was harassed by strange conjectures as to the result of his interview with Paul. She was, however, of all women, perhaps the one who could wait the most patiently, and wait in silence too, for the information which she was still craving to be made acquainted with. In this manner, she

had to pass many hours of the day, for her brother reached home about the accustomed time of dinner in the middle of the day, and he appeared in no haste to seek a private interview with her. Indeed, she thought he rather shunned it. It seemed to her that there was something altered in his look and manner—altered for the better, she was fain to hope; but then, why did he not tell her all, and make her happier, as she doubted not he could.

"Ah! well!" she concluded meekly, "I dare say he is not thinking about me at all. No doubt I shall hear all at the right time, and in the right way."

There was now so much to think and talk about at the Grange, that the family sometimes was divided into little coteries of two or three, scattered occasionally about the garden, or grouped together in different parts of the house, but all earnest in conversation, which generally appeared to be of a confidential nature, though all were probably equally acquainted with the facts or circumstances discussed.

Amongst other topics, the pleasant return of Reuben amongst them could not fail to be a subject of remark; and it so happened, that

Susannah and her father, having accidentally met, and feeling reluctant to enter the house before the day had closed, for it was a lovely afternoon, promising a gorgeous sunset, they sauntered together along an orchard path, and then opening a private gate into the fields, pursued their walk until the full moon rose over the trees of the orchard, and shone upon their path.

Impressed with the calm beauty of the surrounding scene, they spoke in soft low tones, rather musingly, as if thinking aloud; until Susannah ventured to touch upon the altered appearance of her brother, remarking that he really looked as if he intended to settle down at home, and be a comfort to them all.

"Yes," observed her father; "I would fain hope that the society he has just left may have produced this favourable change."

"It seems to me," continued Susannah, "if I might venture to say so much, that if we could but trust him more, and show that we did so, it would be better for him."

"But who *can* trust him, I wonder?" said the father; "and to pretend to do so without feeling any real confidence in him, would be acting a falsehood."

"Perhaps I am mistaken," said Susannah with a sigh. "It may be more difficult to deal with young men than I am aware of. And yet, father, I do believe after all, that Reuben is better than he seems—than he *chooses* to seem, I might almost say; for there is a strange recklessness and perverseness about him, that makes him show all the worst parts of his character, and hide the best."

"I wish I could think so," said her father. "It would spare me many a sleepless hour."

"Ah! do think so, dear father! Let us all try to think so; and that I firmly believe will help Reuben more than severity of any kind."

"I think we have not much to charge ourselves with in the way of severity," observed her father.

But Susannah still argued in favour of kindness and confidence; and she spoke so feelingly and earnestly, yet all the while so gently, that a sterner nature than that of Jacob Law might well have been softened by her generous and sisterly persuasions.

By degrees the conversation turned upon other subjects, and they were just about to turn into the orchard again, when two figures appeared in the distance, one of which they thought must be

Reuben, it looked so like him, only that this person, whoever it might be, walked with his head bent forward, as if in deep thought, and so slowly, that altogether they did not think it could be Reuben.

The other figure was that of a woman, who seemed as if carrying a child. She, too, walked slowly, often turning to her companion as she spoke, apparently with great emphasis; for her hand was sometimes uplifted and her head thrown back. And then she placed herself in the path, as if determined to interrupt the progress of the person to whom her vehement expressions were addressed.

Susannah and her father stood astonished, as they now became sure that the man was Reuben himself; for the moon shone full upon both, while those who watched them were concealed by the shadow of some spreading trees.

"Now, Susannah, what dost thou say to that?" her father whispered between his clenched teeth; for Jacob Law was naturally a hasty and passionate man, and the spectacle he now beheld looked, to say the best of it, very suggestive of what his soul abhorred.

Susannah remained silent, pale, and motionless.

But when her father moved onward towards the two figures, evidently intending to confront them in the path, she involuntarily walked by his side, and thus the two parties met.

Reuben started, as well he might. The woman, bold, shameless creature, as Jacob Law believed her to be, looked not in the least degree abashed.

"Please to come along with me," said the father, seizing the arm of his son. "And as for that woman!—"

"Father!" exclaimed Reuben, indignantly snatching back his arm. "I am not a child to be dragged away by force. And this woman, take my word for it, is not a subject for bad names."

"I will not take thy word!" exclaimed the father, still more angrily. "I do not believe anything thou may choose to say. Facts speak too plainly."

The woman's face was pale in the moonlight, and her eyes looked like living fire as she flashed a lightning glance at the speaker, and then burst into a sudden laugh of bold defiance.

This was more than a man of his nature could bear. Reuben also, greatly exasperated by what his father had said about his word, added fuel to

the fire by giving vent to a perfect volley of passionate expressions without any very definite meaning.

The woman's face was soon grave again. It had been but a momentary astonishment at the absurdity of the father's suspicions which had caused her sudden and contemptuous laugh; and this immediately gave place to the look of anxiety and distress which her countenance had worn when first interrupted in her earnest expostulations.

Susannah now asked her quietly to go away; and, turning slowly round, she walked with evident reluctance back along the way from which they had come. But a terrible altercation had by this time begun between the father and the son. Never before had there been so entire a disruption of all the ties of affection and family regard. Reuben of course threw back every charge with indignation, and especially this last. And then with his accustomed perverseness, while smarting under the imputation of falsehood which he knew he did not deserve, he began to make himself out to be worse a hundred times than his father had supposed.

Being such a wretch, he said it was not fit

that he should associate with respectable people. And then he uttered a wild vow that he would never enter his father's house again, unless it was to die beneath his roof. That, he said, would surely not be denied him, if only for his mother's sake.

Susannah stood and heard all this without a word. Indeed, what could she say? Reuben was turning to go away in this strange desperate mood; he was actually going, and his father would not, or could not, ask him to come into the house with them, in order that they might talk more calmly.

"Oh! father," exclaimed Susannah, "don't let him go in this way. Perhaps it is all a mistake." But finding her father immovable, she ran to Reuben, and without a word clasped him around the neck, and kissed his cheek, as if to offer him this mute assurance that by her, at least, he was still both trusted and beloved.

Susannah then went into the house with her father, but she could not speak. Trouble was heavy upon her, and all the more so, because for the first time in her life she thought her father had been very wrong—very hasty in his judgment—and very harsh in his conduct altogether.

It was the first time too, that the bond of family union had been violently, and openly, torn asunder. But since no one knew this beyond her father and herself, she disclosed to no one what had passed, but retired early to her own room, there to think, and wonder, and pray. What else could she do? All seemed so dark and strange, and new, in consequence of this unfortunate rupture. She was shut out from all chance of hearing what had transpired between her brother and Paul. What could she do but pray, and think, and wonder, more and more?

Happily Susannah was alone that night, Lydia having gone to stay a few days with her cousin Dora. So she could nurse her troubled thoughts without any witness to the restless anxiety which made it impossible for her to sleep. For an hour or more she had sat rocking herself in a chair by the window, where the moon shone in as softly as if there was no strife or sorrow in the world; and in order to feel more entirely secluded, and at peace, she had extinguished her candle, and drawn aside the window curtains, so as to admit a full view of the moonlight falling on the trees, and shrubs, and silvering all the grass and flower beds in the garden below. It was a lovely scene, even

independently of all the treasured associations of home and childhood; and here there was not a walk, or grassy slope, or rustic seat, or leafy bower, that was not in some way connected with those bye-gone days which now looked not less innocent in retrospect, than they were happy at the time; and with all was fondly associated the image of her brother. His merry laugh seemed still to echo in her ear; his light step to skip along amongst the flowers; his lighter words and playful badinage—Oh! why was it so sad to think of all this now? But so it is, that no anguish is so keen as that which brings again, in circumstances of pain and sorrow, the memory of the light-hearted, the thoughtless, and the gay.

Long and mournfully did Susannah muse upon this scene. It seemed to her that life had lost something since those pleasant days, so sweet in recollection. Was it that all the innocence of life was gone, or was that innocence only imaginary? Was there really, even then, a dark under current of evil flowing on through channels so bright and smooth upon the surface, that no one asked what might be concealed beneath?

While these thoughts were passing through her mind, and blending with her tender recollections

of the past, Susannah became suddenly aware that a shadow was moving along a grassy walk at the side of the garden, and soon a man's figure emerged from amongst the trees, and stood forth in the clear moonlight. She knew that figure too well to be mistaken. Reuben then had come back. The ties of nature had been too strong. How welcome—how precious was the thought that he had really returned to those who loved him best, and of his own free will. In an instant her window was thrown open, and her head stretched out in order that she might speak to him without disturbing any other person in the house. Her father's window opened quite in an opposite direction; Robert Moreton's only on that side, and she knew he might be trusted both for prudence and secrecy.

"Come nearer," said Susannah, in a half whisper, stretching her head forward, and her brother came and stood upon the gravel walk immediately below. He looked up. It might be the moonlight which made his appearance and his gestures look so strange. Susannah cared for nothing just at that moment, but how to get him back again safe under the shelter of her father's roof.

"I want thee to come out into the garden to

me," said a voice, which, but for the evidence of her senses, she would not have believed to be her brother's.

Speaking more impatiently, he said again, "Come now. There is something I must say to thee, and ought to have said before."

"But would it not be better," asked Susannah, "for me to let thee in, and so to talk together in thy own room?"

"I have no room in this house," said her brother in a deep hollow tone. But immediately he laughed, so that Susannah doubted whether, after all, he was not playing her some foolish trick.

He soon, however, spoke more like himself, and this time he said, "I have something to tell thee about Paul."

Susannah waited not a moment longer, but, gliding silently out of her room and down the stairs, she opened a side door into the garden, and was soon standing in the moonlight beside her brother.

He took her hand. His own was hot and feverish. "Let us find a place to sit down," he said, "for I want a good long talk;" and then he

laughed again, and rambled off about the ridiculous and romantic nature of the interview.

Susannah understood now what was the matter; and, knowing also that it was of the utmost importance to be calm and self-possessed, she led him to a sheltered seat, and, sitting down beside him, said quietly, "Well, what about Paul?"

It was difficult to say even so much as this, and Susannah spoke with closed teeth, and choking voice, for there was that about her brother which shocked her beyond expression, though she struggled hard not to betray what she was feeling.

"Paul," said he, turning suddenly towards her—"Paul is a villain."

"Reuben!"

"I say a villain, and nothing less."

Reuben had evidently lost sight altogether of the intimacy and attachment so long existing between Paul and his sister. Indeed, he was just now so bewildered on many points, that Susannah attached but little importance at first to this strong exclamation, well knowing that her brother could sometimes, even when his senses were more clear, heap opprobrious epithets upon those who happened for the moment to have excited his displeasure.

There were fits of consciousness, however, in which Reuben even now evinced the strongest desire to communicate something of importance to his sister, only that he could not keep to one point, but as before, went off to other subjects; and sometimes laughed so long, and foolishly, that Susannah, whose very nerves were quivering with anxiety to come at something definite and real, found enough to do to command even her untiring patience, so seldom known to fail.

"How is Paul a villain?" she said at last.

"Well, I will tell thee," Reuben began again, in a more collected manner. "When I reached Layton I found him at first rather shy of communicating any of his plans to me. But, thinking I suppose, that I was no better than himself, and if what my father says be true, I am not only no better, but a little worse—Susannah, did I ever tell a lie to any of you?"

"Don't think of that dear. It was said in haste and anger."

"Think of it! How can I help thinking of it, and feeling it too? Why, here I had come back disgusted with all badness of every kind—quite horrified—and with Paul and his companions especially disgusted; and just as I was

in the mood to commence a different kind of life, to be taunted as I was, and called a liar into the bargain! Why, Susie, I'm as innocent, with regard to that woman, as my father is himself. She was telling me, poor soul, such a dreadful history! Oh, that Paul! He is a villain, if ever there was one on earth."

Susannah gradually became quite silent. She had no longer any response to offer—any question to propose; but sitting in the same attitude, rigid as a statue, and pale as the very moonlight which fell upon her face, she let her brother ramble on as if unconscious of what he was saying, though every now and then some careless word seemed to shoot through her frame like a poisoned arrow.

"Well, as I was saying," Reuben continued, "I persuaded him at last to tell me what he was about, for I soon discovered there was some project on the way; and supposing I had no more conscience than himself, he told me—Ah! I remember—there was some vow they made me take, that I would never tell. So don't say a word, Susie—not a single word to any living soul. As I said before, I was so disgusted with their schemes, I would have nothing to do with them;

and then a terrible quarrel somehow or other broke out, I don't exactly know how; only I left in a hurry, and don't care if I never see that false dishonourable wretch again. Does my father think I am like him, I wonder? I suppose he does, or worse; for I think both he and my mother like these kind of hypocrites.

"But the woman?"

"It was about this woman, that I wanted a word. Why, Susannah, she is Paul's wife, and that is Paul's child! I remember the woman quite well when she was a servant at old Rutherford's, and a handsome clever girl she was. I used to think then there was a kind of intimacy between her and Paul; but I supposed it was only that she let him in at nights, and helped him to keep out of scrapes. But now, the woman tells me, she is his true and honourable wife, and has lived as such for years, only they were married in the Roman Catholic fashion, which she, poor creature, thinks is all sufficient. And now, Susannah, what dost thou say to all that?"

"I don't believe it."

"No more did I at first, more especially as the poor woman tells me she had once a written cer-

tificate of the marriage, which she always kept by her in a place of the greatest safety, and that lately, on opening the box where it was kept, she found it was gone—entirely gone. And now Paul is off nobody knows where, and she and her child are thrown upon the world without a friend. The poor creature is distracted, for as she says, who will believe her story when she has no written proof to show?"

By this time Reuben had talked himself into something more like sobriety; and in proportion as he regained the use of his senses, a dim recollection seemed to dawn upon him of something more than common intimacy existing between his sister and the man he had thus been so unsparingly abusing. A slight consciousness too seemed to dawn upon him, that he must have wounded the feelings of his sister, and therefore he began to endeavour to soothe them by attempting something like a brotherly caress.

Susannah could not at first respond. If she was pale as marble, she was almost as cold, rigid, and motionless. She let her brother kiss her cheek, but still she spoke not. He then, with the childish tenderness which belongs particularly to

conditions such as his, began to weep. There was no resisting her brother's tears. Susannah folded him in her arms, and wept with him long, and bitterly.

"And now," she said, when at last recovering herself—"Let us go into the house."

"Never!" exclaimed Reuben, immediately starting to his feet, "Never, as I told my father, will I enter his doors again, unless I am carried in unconsciously."

"But where wilt thou go then?" asked his sister.

"I don't know—anywhere, but there."

"Hast thou any money?"

"Not a farthing."

"Wait then until I run into the house, I have a little still by me, remaining of my uncle's legacy. It is all I have, but thou art very welcome to it, dear. So come to the window again, and I will let it down in the purse."

"I will," said Reuben, "Only pray make haste."

Ah! he was more eager for the money just then, than for any last word, or kind farewell. Susannah did not feel this at the time: she remembered it afterwards. Just now, she was like

a person walking in a dream. But she found the money without any difficulty, secured it in a purse of her own making, dropped it from the window, and then watched her brother as he hastened from the garden without another word.

CHAPTER VII.

If any disturbance of the under current of human feeling could possibly have altered the outward aspect of their social affairs, it might reasonably have been expected that the family at the Grange would now have betrayed, both in their appearance, and their general conversation, some unmistakeable evidence of anxiety and trouble. So far from this, however, they met in the morning with the same outward calmness as usual. No ruffled brow was visible—no curious and enquiring glance peered round the circle. No neglect of person, or of dress could have been detected—no want of order even in the minutest article. All the duties of the table were discharged with their accustomed nicety, and exactness; nor was there, in any respect, a failure of those little acts of kindness and attention with which every want was supplied.

Susannah, as usual, poured out her mother's tea, and carried it upstairs, before attending to other members of the family. She returned without having spilled a single drop, and taking her seat at the table, dispensed to her father and Robert Moreton exactly the same proportion of cream and sugar which their separate tastes required. It is true the meal was rather a silent one. Jacob Law was particularly silent, as he had been on the previous evening, and no one mentioned Reuben, all being aware that subject was not one to be spoken of, or enquired about.

Robert, in all probability very glad to escape, took the earliest opportunity, after family reading, to repair to the office where his daily labours were pursued. But Jacob Law still lingered, and when he and Susannah were alone, he said, rather abruptly—"I think I shall set out for London to-morrow morning. I should like to have a few things got ready—sufficient for two or three days."

"They shall be quite ready," replied Susannah; and then she entered into several minute enquiries as to whether her father would like cotton or woollen articles, and what portmanteau he would prefer, with a variety of other items, connected with personal convenience, such as are generally

supposed to be regarded only by persons whose minds are perfectly at ease.

Jacob Law, too, entered fully into all these considerations, as if he had just then no other subject for his thoughts; but when all was settled and he was about to leave the room, Susannah said, rather earnestly, "Father!"—

"What is it child?" he asked turning back from the door, and looking for the first time that morning, full into his daughter's face,

"Art thou well, Susannah?" he enquired.

"Not quite," she answered. "Yet not much amiss either."

Her father recollected the past evening, and the scene she had witnessed in connection with himself and he asked no more questions.

Susannah spoke again, though with a voice less firm and clear. "Father," she said, "I should like to go to London with thee."

"To London! what for?"

"I believe I must go, Father."

"Well, child, if thy mind is set upon it, I don't know that I have much objection, provided thy mother can spare thee."

"I will ask Lydia to come home."

"Canst thou be ready for the early coach tomorrow?"

"I expect to be quite ready."

"And to whose house art thou thinking of going? Thy cousins are not at home, and I am afraid I must put up at an inn."

"I should like to be at an inn, too."

"It would be pleasant to me if thou wouldst explain thyself a little more."

"Not just now, please father, I will tell thee afterwards, only I *must* go."

"Well, my dear, I have not hitherto found thee chargeable with levity, or with setting up thy own will in opposition to the witness within. I hope thou hast enquired there. If so I don't know that I should go so far as to suppose thou may'st not be right in this matter—only—"

"Yes, I know, dear father, it must seem very strange to thee. But do please try to trust me a little just now. I will endeavour to tell thee more by the way. For the present, I feel it laid upon me to do what I speak of, and I trust I am not about to undertake anything in my own strength."

Jacob Law could say no more. The very expression his daughter had made use of—"that it was laid upon her," and the evident conviction that something very serious was required at her hands, was too much in accordance with the principles

which he strenuously upheld, to admit of the matter being subjected to mere human or worldly calculation. So he went and talked with his wife about it, and as she had already been made acquainted with Susannah's intentions, and had moreover gathered from her that the prospect before her had reference to Paul Rutherford, the parents considered the subject of too delicate a nature for them to meddle in very closely, at the same time, that they were willing to conclude all must be safe and proper, so long as Paul was the party concerned; and especially as Susannah was, of all the young women they knew, the most careful and scrupulous in her general conduct.

There were at this time many other subjects of deep moment to occupy their attention, amongst them, this affair of the foolish little Dora's to be put a stop to—*that* was pressing and immediate. Then there was Reuben—that ever painful subject of reflection—not less painful now that the father had his own hasty conduct to look back upon; for, justify himself as he might with regard to the actual words he had uttered, self condemnation was too strong for him, when he remembered the heat and the violence of his own feelings at the moment; and for one who honestly

believed that the state of the heart before God is the true test of character, this was a most humiliating phase of his own history to look back upon.

We are not quite sure, either, that in the retirement of that secluded chamber, where so many hours of Rebecca's experience were passed, there had not been a few words of remonstrance, almost amounting to rebuke, addressed to her husband on the effects of his hasty decision in placing the young foreigner beneath her sister's roof. We are not quite sure that this good woman was wholly free from that very natural tendency to make the disastrous consequences of even a well-meant act a rod of chastisement to the offender. Letting this pass, there was quite enough upon the father's mind just now to obscure, in some degree, the keenness of vision with which he would otherwise have investigated the motives of his daughter in the strange and unexpected step she was about to take.

Thus occupied, each with their separate share of anxious and conflicting thoughts, the two travellers set out upon their journey, expecting to reach London at a late hour in the evening. They had little conversation by the way, the carriage

being filled with other occupants, and, perhaps, each had enough to do with their own private reflections.

It was a sort of old-fashioned family hotel to which Jacob Law conducted his daughter that night, and very comfortable was the appearance of the well-furnished apartment into which they were shown; but Jacob had no spirits just now for the old associations of agreeable memory to which he had seldom been insensible on taking up his abode in such a place, and ordering and arranging for the greatest possible amount of reasonable enjoyment. All that he cared to ask for was tea and beds. Thus the two travellers silently partook of their sparing meal, and then, when the servants had retired, turned to the fire, and sat gazing into the embers for some time.

The father was the first to speak. "We have each, I suppose, our separate business," he said. "It might not be amiss to arrange a little to-night as to what we wish to do. Does thine lie at any considerable distance?"

Susannah spoke with difficulty, and her hand trembled as she held the candle near, for her father to examine a map of London, which he had brought with him, and now spread upon the table.

As well as she could, she explained the direction in which she had to go. But when her father found it was to a very low part of the city, connected with wharfs and shipping; he looked up with some astonishment, and said,—"I don't think it will do for thee to go there, child."

"Perhaps not alone," replied Susannah, "and I have thought of asking thee to accompany me, perhaps to very near the place. I don't think I should be likely to detain thee long."

"Of course I shall go with thee," said her father, "But what *can* take thee there?"

Feeling that the time was come when she could no longer, with any propriety, withhold her confidence entirely from her father, Susannah mastered her feelings so far as to say,—"I don't know whether thou art aware of it, but Paul is about to set out on a journey of some length, and I must see him before he goes."

"Well, if that be the case," said her father, the best way by far would be for him to come and see thee here. I will go myself, and—"

"Please don't, father; said Susannah, laying her hand upon his arm. "Please let me do what I see best in this matter. It seems bold in me to say so, but I feel that I am the only judge of what can be done, and what must be done."

"I don't like thy going to the place, at all," said her father. "I should scarcely like to go there myself, except on very urgent business."

"It *is* very urgent business," said his daughter; and she spoke and looked with such sad and almost solemn earnestness, that her father felt constrained to yield, though not without remarking that he had never heard of Paul being likely to go anywhere.

"Very likely not," said Susannah. "The business on which he is engaged requires both secrecy, and promptness of decision."

"I saw George Rutherford at the monthly meeting," continued her father, "and he said nothing of this journey. We talked about the young man too, and he told me how very serviceable he had been to him of late in some affairs of moment."

"Yes, that is it," said Susannah. "The father and son have been much reconciled of late, and it is this private and confidential business respecting which Paul is under the necessity of acting with so much prudence. I rather think they have been defrauded, or have reason to suppose they have been defrauded, to a considerable extent, and that Paul has discovered some clue

in the matter which he is expecting to be able to follow up; and this is the reason why he cannot have it known exactly where he is, and also why he must even get off altogether, without his movements being suspected. From his last letter I am led to understand there are parties on the watch who must be kept in ignorance of where he is. But he has given me his address, and it is necessary, for reasons which I cannot now explain, that I should see him before he goes."

"It seems a very mysterious concern altogether," said Jacob Law, after musing for a few minutes; "and really, Susannah, if I had not a tolerably good opinion of the young man, I don't think I could consent to thy seeing him under such circumstances."

"Father," said Susannah, with a countenance pale as death itself, and again pressing her cold hand upon his,—"the case admits of no doubt—I *must* see him."

"Very well, my dear," said the father, again borne down in his prudential calculations by the force of his daughter's purpose, which from her look and manner might well be supposed to derive its power from some supernatural or spiritual source. "Thou shalt go," he continued, "and I

will accompany thee, at least so far as to see thee in safety."

"Perhaps thou wouldst wait for me somewhere?"

"Yes, that would be the better plan. But art thou not timid about the matter thyself? I think thou art trembling."

"No, I don't think I am timid, only it seems strange. I dare say I shall do very well."

Susannah said this with lips like ashes. She was not apprehensive of any ordinary or intelligible danger; but her very soul was shaking as if the springs of life were broken, and her heart and breath would no longer obey the law of nature.

Jacob Law rose up, and rang the bell. His idea of sympathy comprehended always a little creaturely comfort; and never, perhaps, was his customary kindness, as exhibited in this form, more necessary than at the present moment.

Nor was Susannah perverse or obstinate in refusing the help now afforded with so much promptness and tenderness of feeling. She was herself as much averse, as her father could be, to all outward exhibitions of emotion—to all scenes —to all those manifestations of excitement, whe-

ther pleasurable or painful, which some persons think so interesting. It was the business of her life to bear her own burdens, and other people's too. If in this, the greatest strait of all, she could only get through with common decency and decorum, without disturbing her father's mind, or covering herself with shame—why then, she thought, the remainder of life and experience would be easy in comparison, whatever might betide. So she took what her father presented to her pale lips, and if she was not comforted, he was; and that for the present was enough for her.

The next morning, after a silent and hasty breakfast, a carriage was ordered to convey the father and daughter to a part of the city which lies along the river side. Susannah had made herself acquainted, by studying the map, with the names of some streets in the vicinity of that which was to terminate her journey; and in one of these she chose to leave the carriage, in order to proceed to the exact place on foot. Her father assisted her to find the number and the name which Paul had given her. They belonged to one of a row of second-rate houses, with nothing to render it in any way remarkable. The win-

dows looked towards the street, but the door opened into a kind of passage or alley, leading to a court. It was a common, mean place, Jacob Law observed, but looked in no other way objectionable, that he could perceive.

Having convinced themselves that this was really the house, they next looked about for some shop, or other place in which the father might wait for his daughter; and finding one at last, nearly opposite, where he could be accommodated, Susannah crossed the street, and went towards the archway beneath which was the name and number specified. There was no knocker, but a bell, and she rang three times—the last time rather sharply, before any one came. At length the door was opened just a little way, by a shabby-looking servant girl, who seemed determined not to allow any one to pass into the house, for she spoke with the door still nearly closed.

"Is there a person here of the name of Rutherford?" enquired Susannah.

"No," said the servant.

"I think there is," Susannah said, again; "or if not in now, I think he has been here."

"I don't know," said the girl.

"Is there no one I could speak to, in the house?"

The girl was about to retreat, when Susannah holding out a note, said "Here, take this, please; I think thou wilt find somebody to whom it belongs."

The girl received the note somewhat reluctantly, and disappeared, closing the door behind her, so that Susannah was left still standing outside. When a few minutes had elapsed, she rang the bell again. A resolution such as she had formed is not easily baffled in its purpose. Again the door was opened, and this time the servant allowed her to pass in, and showed her the way into a side parlour of no very inviting appearance. Susannah, however, was not very fastidious just now with regard to any mere external matters. She had observed on entering the house, that the other end of the passage was crowded with trunks and packages, and she supposed the house might be a kind of receiving place for the baggage and property of persons about to embark at the landing-place hard by. It did not strike her at the time, that there was anything otherwise than respectable about the place, until by chance her ear detected a sort of

tittering laugh in the next room, from which that where she stood was separated only by a wooden partition. This rather startled her, but remembering her Friend's bonnet, she concluded she was the cause of amusement to some idle persons who might be lodging in the house.

Presently, however, all other thoughts and surmises were lost in the consciousness that a voice well known to her was speaking in the passage. It was Paul Rutherford's voice, and she distinctly heard him say—"You are quite sure she is alone?—no one with her, nor waiting outside?"

The answer she did not hear, for there was a good deal of confused talking, mixed with the tread of hurrying feet in different parts of the house. But at last the door opened, and Paul himself walked into the room, with the most innocent and familiar manner imaginable. He held out his hand as if to welcome an intimate and valued friend: Susannah made no corresponding movement. A great gulf was between them, and would remain there until the truth should be fully known.

Paul was evidently surprised—perhaps a little alarmed, but it was only lest Susannah had be-

trayed him by making known his present hiding-place. He asked if she was quite alone. She answered that she was. He then asked if what he had told her was still safe in her keeping. To this also her answer was satisfactory.

Feeling thus assured, Paul assumed his accustomed easy manner, and would have drawn his visitor to a seat beside him, but again he was made to feel that there was a purpose in her visit of a very different character from that fond farewell which might be expected from woman's unsuspecting love.

"I have come," Susannah said, in her own simple manner, "To ask a few questions, to which I expect, and demand, the answer of truth."

Paul did not like this commencement. From the first he had felt awed by that calm dignity which was far more difficult for him to cope with than would have been the most bitter and violent abuse.

"I have come to ask thee about that woman," continued Susannah—"whether she is thy wife or not?"

Paul started. His countenance instantly fell, and for a moment thrown entirely off his guard,

he looked the picture of abject depravity, and base deception. Flinching under the gaze of the ever steady eye of searching truth, he could not for some time recover himself, and when he did, it was only so far as to utter a perfect outburst of invective against the woman to whom allusion had been made; and even in doing this he betrayed himself by this inadvertent acknowledgment that he was conscious of some such connection, though no name had been mentioned. The fact was, his whole endeavours had for some time been directed to one only object—to the securing of his base purposes from detection, until his escape from the country should be effected; and so entirely this project occupied every faculty of his sordid and selfish nature, that he had taken very few precautions against being detected in faults which to him were comparatively unimportant. Hence the startling effect of this direct enquiry, coming from the quarter whence, of all others, it was least acceptable, as well as least anticipated; and hence too the confusion and embarrassment of the moment which threw him upon the only available resource, that of speaking of the individual in question as a monster of depravity, and of himself as a most injured man.

All this, with the force of deep and heavy condemnation, flashed in a moment upon the naturally strong convictions of Susannah's mind. But her purpose was not yet completed, though her judgment was convinced; and in the same quiet but determined manner, she spoke again.

"And the child," she said—"Is it provided for?"

This was a second stroke under which the guilty man betrayed himself again. This time he had nothing to say, and so confounded were all those quick and ready faculties of his, which had long been strengthened by the vilest uses of deception, that he actually fell into a kind of pitiful tale about the follies and the temptations of youth, and the dangers to which a system like that of his father's is sure to be attended by, in the earliest period of man's life.

Susannah waved her hand to indicate that she would hear no more. Every word to which she was compelled to listen, every moment of time which she was thus compelled to endure, were not only full of torture, but insult to the majesty of innocence and truth. She had not come there to be degraded, but to know for herself what was real in the past, and inevitable in the future

Bravely, and nobly, she endured the ordeal through which she was passing, for there was no misgiving in her perfect comprehension of the case, no womanly weakness in her entire and unhesitating reception of the hateful truth. A great gulf was indeed between them; and with that sudden dropping of the curtain which had so long obscured her vision, oh! what a miserable wreck was laid at her feet!—how utterly despicable did all that was around her appear—how odious that refuge of lies by which she had so long been deceived.

But was her mission fulfilled? Was it thus she must part for the last time from one with whom she had once held intimate communion, and over whom it seemed that she had influence? Dreadful as it would be to remain another moment in this vile place—for she now both saw and felt that it *was vile*, she must not—dared not go without a word of remonstrance—not for her own sake, that consideration was obliterated now, blotted out of remembrance as if it had never occupied a place in feeling, thought, or calculation; but for the sake a little of old family associations—beyond that, for the sake of virtue, honour, truth, and goodness—for the sake of all that a noble nature most esteems, she must speak a few words in parting, let them cost her what they may.

So, with a voice like one who might be speaking from the grave, Susannah uttered a few simple but earnest denunciations against the guilty course of life which Paul had long been leading; and then, with uplifted hand, and with a look almost like that of inspired prophecy, she went on to describe the last, but irrevocable condition of such a course, if not repented of, and the awful death by which an eternal seal would be set upon horrors not to be described.

In all probability, one of the last things Paul Rutherford would have desired was to be compelled to listen to these words; but awed by the sublime power of that innocence which could no longer endure even the remotest contact with his guilt, he could not, dared not, interrupt the speaker, but stood with his eyes cast down, pretending to feel, if he did not really feel, the solemn import of those expressions to which he could not choose but listen.

When Susannah had said all which she considered herself called to say, she turned to leave the room; but stopping as if a thought of some importance had occurred to her, she said—"Respecting the woman—is it thy wish she should go with thee?"

"By no means," exclaimed Paul, with evident disgust.

"Is there any provision made for her, and the child?" enquired Susannah.

"Yes—no—not perhaps, exactly," said Paul, with some confusion—"Reuben owes me money."

"Let me pass," said Susannah, her face flushed with an indignation such as she could scarcely have been made to feel for herself; and she moved quickly, in evident haste to be gone.

Paul, however, had a question to ask now, and he said with some hesitation—"That young man from Germany—I suppose he is still——"

"He is in London," replied Susannah.

"In London?" exclaimed Paul.

"I told thee in my last letter that he had set out for London."

"I never received it then. How long has he been here?"

"Three days, I think."

"Three days!" exclaimed Paul, with consternation in his looks, and then suddenly recollecting himself he began to apologise by saying he was pressed for time, as people were waiting to take his things on board, and the vessel would sail with the next tide. But while he uttered

these hurried and incoherent sentences, Susannah quietly walked out of the room, passing forth into the open street like one who cares not where the next step may lead, so as they are but clear of the place they are leaving entirely, and for ever.

Jacob Law had been for some time anxiously waiting for his daughter, and he was by her side, and had drawn her arm within his, almost before she was aware of his presence. Soon, however, she became sensible of the kind parental support, and with that thought there came upon her a sudden gush of feeling such as she was but ill prepared to bear.

"It was very kind of thee, dear father," she said, at length, when she found strength to speak. "It was very kind of thee to come and help me through this."

She could say no more. Her self-possession then entirely gave way, and she would have sunk upon the ground, had not her father, passing his arm beneath her shawl, encircled her waist, and thus half carried her, until they reached another and more respectable looking street: then they entered a chemist's shop, and having administered some restoratives, Jacob Law had the satisfaction

of seeing his daughter in a few minutes so far recovered as to be able to pursue her walk, at least until a conveyance could be obtained.

Susannah did not proceed, however, without a few words to her father, and, whispering to him, she asked if there was not some quiet place where they could walk a little while. Quiet place there was none; but, as he said, there was something very much like retirement in a crowd where every one was too much engaged to think of them, Susannah consented to go down to the river-side, where her father hoped that the air from the water, and perhaps the busy and exciting scene, might help to restore her strength, as well as to divert the current of her thoughts.

Here then they walked for some time, before Susannah was able to speak, making their silent way amongst the eager multitude, who were too intent upon the business of lading and unlading, and other occupations connected with the many vessels lying along the side of the wharf, to notice the Quaker gentleman and his fair, pale daughter, as they sauntered to and fro with deliberate pace and downcast and abstracted looks.

After some time, Susannah began by saying, "Father?"

"Yes, child," her father replied, in his gentlest, kindest tone, for he was deeply moved with pity for his daughter, though still in total ignorance as to the cause of her distress, for such he saw it was, and that of no common nature or degree.

"Yes, child," Jacob Law repeated, by way of encouraging his daughter to proceed.

"I have a little favour to ask of thee, dear father."

"What is it, my love?"

"Never again to mention in my presence, at least more than is necessary, the name—of—of—"

"Paul Rutherford?"

"Yes, father. He is a base, bad man!"

"Susannah?"

"It is true—too true. I will tell thee all some time; at present I must be a little spared."

"Thou shalt be spared," said her father, with the tenderest affection, pressing her arm closer to his side. And then, without another word, they paced silently a few times more along the side of the water; after which they turned away, and having engaged an empty carriage which had just brought some passengers to a steamer about to sail, they returned directly to the hotel; not, however, before Susannah had detected, amongst

the crowd engaged in getting their goods and property on board the vessel, the muffled figure of a man, through whose disguise her eye, and perhaps hers alone, could discover unmistakably the well-known form of Paul Rutherford.

CHAPTER VIII.

No sooner had Jacob Law had the satisfaction of seeing his daughter placed in security, and comparative comfort, than he began to turn his attention again to the original purpose of his journey; thinking that the sooner they could return to their peaceful home the better it would be both for himself and his daughter, who, in her present state of mind, was but little fitted for bearing the noise and confusion by which they were necessarily surrounded.

For this purpose he set out towards the quarter in which he expected to find the young man Rosen. The place was distant, and the young man not within. So Jacob returned late and weary, regretting that another day would have to be spent perhaps in another fruitless errand. He took the precaution, however, to leave a note for the young man, expressing his desire to see

him, and to this he trusted for the prevention of any unnecessary delay.

Thus the two travellers sat down to a very silent meal, and at an early hour Susannah retired to her own room, with a strong recommendation from her father not to disturb herself in the morning, as he said he should be particularly engaged. And perhaps no advice just then could have been more welcome.

Seated at his solitary breakfast the next morning, Jacob Law began for the first time to prepare himself for the business which lay immediately before him. It did not look, on a nearer view, the most reasonable or likely thing that he should attempt to put a stop to a prospect of marriage between two young people, over neither of whom he held any legitimate authority; and perhaps, if the whole truth had been revealed, it would have been discovered that he was not altogether free from a lurking suspicion that he was meddling in a matter which did not fall within the range of his absolute duties. However, his one hope remained—his one chance was still left unaltered. It was that of working upon the mind of the young man himself, so as to induce him to give up the connection on the ground of

the trouble and distress it would occasion to a large number of friends and relatives.

While occupied with these reflections, and not quite sure even now how it would be best to proceed; sometimes looking impatiently at his watch to see if the morning was so far advanced, that a call might reasonably be made at such an hour, Jacob was startled by the announcement that a gentleman wished to see him; and looking at the card which the waiter presented, he read with much satisfaction the name of Rosen.

"Let him come up immediately," said Jacob Law; but almost before the words were uttered, a very gentlemanly figure entered the room, bowing in a manner which Jacob thought exceedingly unsuitable and unnecessary. These movements were accompanied, too, by a variety of apologies and explanations, uttered in such broken and imperfect English, and yet with such vehemence, that Jacob's quiet business seemed quite out of the question, unless the young man could compose himself a little; for he was evidently in a state of great excitement, and this was partly the reason why his hurried expressions were scarcely intelligible.

Soon, however, it became very clear that, instead of the tender affections having anything

to do with this outburst, there was some kind of villainy with regard to which the young man was endeavouring to relieve his mind of a vast amount of indignation and disgust: and Jacob Law began to wonder exceedingly why he should come in this extraordinary manner to discharge the burden of his irritated feelings before him, of all people in the world. Never, however, forgetting the manners of a gentleman, Jacob Law begged the young man to be seated, and saying that he was rather slow to understand anything of foreign accent or idiom, he requested him to speak a little more deliberately.

Carl Rosen, for it was he who had sought this early interview, endeavoured to comply, and for a little while he managed so far to command himself as to make the little English he had learned available, in some degree, for his present purpose. In doing this, he uttered the name of Rutherford so many times, and with such distinctness of emphasis, that Jacob began to feel considerable interest in what he had to say.

It now appeared that Paul was especially the object of complaint, and even execration, and that the purpose of his present visit was to ascertain if possible where he might be found.

The young man stated that he had been two whole days endeavouring to trace him out; and by the assistance of some of the agents of police, he had been able to ascertain so far as that he was on the point of leaving the country altogether.

"But why?" Jacob very naturally inquired, "be so earnest in finding him at all; or why speak in such violent terms of one who was rightly engaged in his lawful business, and who, if he should leave the country, would do so with his father's express wish and sanction?"

Carl exclaimed with fresh vehemence that this story was all false; that Paul had succeeded in making his father believe some one had been defrauding him for some time past, while he was himself the deceiver, and his father the dupe. He had pretended even to have discovered who that person was, and at this very moment was supposed to be following in pursuit of him, when, in reality, he was escaping from the country with a large sum of money obtained by these base contrivances from his father, and some other parties with whom he was connected in business.

To these explanations Jacob Law listened without knowing what to think, or, in short, what credit to attach to an account so incoherently

given, and in itself so astonishing and strange. He remembered his daughter's unexpected exclamation on the previous day, that Paul was a "base, bad man," and this rendered the statements he now heard less difficult to believe.

Carl Rosen was besides not sparing of abuses directed against himself, and, perhaps, a little forgetful of the recent accession to his own happiness, he exclaimed in no measured terms against the misfortune by which he had been interrupted in his journey; but above all he appeared to be annoyed and mortified at the delay into which his feelings had betrayed him, when his arrival in London a little earlier might possibly have effectually frustrated this base and barbarous scheme.

The house, he said, in which his father was a partner, had long been closely connected with one in London, which had extensive business transactions with George Rutherford; and it was through this channel that intelligence had reached them in Hamburgh of so suspicious a nature, that he was himself immediately dispatched in the hope that he might be able to ascertain the truth.

"But," added he, suddenly starting up from his seat, "why do I waste time here, when it may

yet be possible to catch the miscreant before he shall have effected his escape? On receiving your note late last night, it occurred to me, that you might possibly know something likely to assist me in this affair. If not, I must be gone."

"Wait one moment," said Jacob Law. "I do not know but I may go with thee. Yet I own I should like to be more fully assured before proceeding farther, that there are sufficient grounds for thy suspicions."

But the doubts which Jacob expressed were quickly put an end to by the entrance of a third witness upon the stage of action. A well-known voice at this moment was heard upon the stairs, speaking in loud and angry tones, and the sound of a heavy foot soon followed, with a deep breathing, as if of some one hurried beyond their natural speed.

Jacob Law, starting from his seat, went immediately to the door, where he was amazed and shocked to behold his friend, George Rutherford, looking weary and travel worn, with marks of the deepest anxiety and distress upon his countenance. With his ever ready sympathy, he took the parent's hand in his, prepared to feel with him on this subject perhaps more than any other. But

there was no cordial response—nothing but defiance, rage, and disappointment.

Jacob drew back in astonishment. Surely, he thought, something even worse than the loss of money must have brought his friend to this. He did not know that nothing could well have been worse to George Rutherford. He did not know that, like a wild animal suddenly robbed of its lawful prey, every feeling of that man's nature was for the moment turned to bitterness and hatred against the whole world, and everything it contained; so that no soft or yielding spot was left whereon a friend might lay his soothing hand.

George had travelled through the night, having set out immediately after receiving intelligence of an alarming nature from the mercantile house of which Carl Rosen had spoken, as being in connection with his father's in Hamburgh; and perhaps the gall and bitterness with which he had been regaling himself by the way, might have received no unmistakeable accessions from the humiliating reflection that his own weakness and credulity in confiding in his son, had brought about the disaster under which he was smarting, as it seemed in body, as well as in mind.

But that which most surprised and shocked his faithful friend, was that any hitherto consistent member of the Society, should display so much of haste and violence of temper—that he should so far forget himself as to utter the most vehement invectives against his son, doing nothing else, until, at last, Carl Rosen suggested that to find him would surely be wiser than only to abuse him.

"True," said Jacob Law, who now felt sufficiently convinced of Paul's delinquency; and in this matter I think I can render you both a little service. Let us have a coach, and proceed without delay."

A coach was soon obtained, and the three men eagerly set out upon their search, for by this time Jacob had fully entered into the spirit of the pursuit, and, perhaps, hoped more than the others, as he had more reason for hoping that Paul might yet be found. He had not seen the figure which Susannah had detected in the crowd on the previous day, nor had he noticed one vessel more than another, so as to see that there was one especially on the point of sailing; and such was the state of his daughter's mind, that she had felt no disposition either to point out the figure to her father,

to suggest anything connected with Paul's escape, or indeed with his proceedings in any way.

It is possible that to Susannah it had all along appeared a very inferior consideration, that a man should be dishonourable in business, to that of his being false and cruel to his wife, and child, to say nothing of the insult to her own more private, and personal feelings, wounded and galled as they were beyond expression. These considerations had so far occupied her thoughts, that she paid but little attention either to what her brother Reuben had said, or what she herself might otherwise have suspected—that there was a plot of deeper import in which Paul was engaged, than any in which women and children could fill a conspicuous place. Thus much of that strong evidence of his guilt which she alone could have brought forward, lay dormant and hidden in her own breast, where it was likely to remain concealed for ever. Happily for her she knew nothing of the present expedition to that vile place which still haunted her memory like a hateful dream; and as her father pursued his way he took advantage of the opportunity to impress upon his companions the necessity of not alluding to this subject before his daughter, if she should happen to be present on their return.

But for his eagerness to attain the end desired, Jacob would have been both ashamed and humbled to find himself enquiring in such a neighbourhood for a person of suspicious character; but instead of this, he recommended to his companions that they should get out of the carriage at a little distance, and walk up to the house, which he had no difficulty in finding again; and when he reached the door, he gave—not very judiciously, such a ring as the inmates of that tenement had probably never heard before.

There was now no difficulty in obtaining admission, although the servant who came to the door replied again that no person of the name of Rutherford had ever been there; and in this she probably stated what she supposed to be true, as it would have been not very likely for a man circumstanced like Paul to allow his real name to transpire.

Here then was an unexpected, but very serious obstacle in their way, and one not to be overcome by such means as any of their party seemed likely to make use of, for even Jacob Law soon lost his patience like the others; so that with the loud storming of the father, and the hurried broken exclamations of the foreigner, a considerable

amount of confusion, as well as discordant sound, was produced. And all the while, the servant, with look and manner totally unmoved, stood waiting as if for some order or message from the gentlemen with which she might retreat.

"There have been travellers here of late, I think? "said Jacob Law, at last seeing the foolishness of all this bluster.

"Many, "said the girl,

"Is this a boarding house?"

"Sometimes."

"Have you any lodgers now?"

"One"

"Who?"

"An old lady"

"Her name?"

"Mrs. Jessop,"

"Humph! Have you anything to do with shipping?"

"Not as I know,"

"Speak out girl!" shouted George Rutherford. "There is a nest of abominable people here—a sink of vice, and iniquity. It is at thy peril to tell these lies to persons like us. We know all about your shameful doings, and we can send a constable to take you all up, and—"

"Stop stop," said Jacob, laying his hand upon the arm of his friend," I believe, George, that quietness is best. Is there no one in the house," he asked the girl, "with whom we could speak?"

"There's Mrs. Jessop."

"Thou art a very foolish young woman," exclaimed Jacob, now losing his temper, like the others, "and I am afraid a very naughty one too. Dost thou know the meaning of a lie?"

"Sometimes I do, but they don't always mean the same thing."

It was evident the girl had been tutored so as to keep any visitor from entering the house. On the present occasion, there seemed to be really nothing to discover. No other individual besides this girl was to be seen, and no sound was heard indicating that any other inmates occupied the house. There was no single package remaining of all those which had been piled up in the passage on the preceding day. All the busy feet which might then be heard about the place had either departed or were still; aud from these and other indications, it seemed probable that had the emissaries of the law obtained admission to the premises, they would have failed in their search

to find any person or thing calculated to lead, with any certainty, to the detection of crime.

There was certainly something more curious than dignified in the position in which the three angry gentlemen found themselves, as they stood confronted with the vacant-looking servant girl, from whom it was impossible to elicit the smallest scrap of information. They were, consequently, not unwilling to accede to the proposal, first made by Jacob Law, that they should leave the premises for the present, and proceed to the river-side. In going out of the house, however, they took good care to look around them in every direction, and even proceeded so far as the court into which the passage led, but still without making any discovery of a nature calculated to awaken the slightest interest.

Most willingly, and pleasantly to himself, would George Rutherford have broken any window of that house, before leaving it; for Jacob Law had gone so far as to assure him that from unquestionable authority he knew his son to have been there on the previous day. Recollecting, however, most opportunely, how deeply his own daughter was implicated in the discovery, and anxious to spare her as much as possible, he

drew his friend aside as they walked along the street, and by a slight hint conveyed his meaning that it must not, on any consideration, be made known that Susannah had any part in this discovery. The enraged and tumultuons mind of the man to whom he spoke did not, in all probability, comprehend very clearly the drift of what was said; but George had so long been accustomed to conform in some degree to suggestions made through certain channels, that he acquiesced at least for the moment. Besides which, it did not really interest him to know what part any woman might have taken in the matter. He wanted his money first, in order that he might grasp it again as his own; and next to that, he wanted his son, in order that he might visit upon his guilty head the vengeance he so richly deserved.

In this manner they pursued their way, as Jacob recommended, immediately to the side of the river, making anxious enquiries of any person there who looked likely to tell them, whether a vessel bound for foreign parts had left the place on the previous day, and it was not long before a pilot gave them in part the information they were seeking. He said that a vessel for Hobart

Town had sailed the day before, with a considerable amount of passengers and goods; that she lay out a good way down the river, so that those who went on board had to take a packet from the wharf; and that she had sailed with the evening tide.

On hearing this, Jacob Law looked first at one of his companions, and then at the other. He thought he knew now how the matter stood. His daughter's visit had most likely given the alarm, and the vessel being already on her way, every chance seemed now lost of ever laying hands upon Paul Rutherford again.

"I see how it is," he said, "numbers are now beginning to emigrate to those parts. He is gone, thou may depend upon it, George! So the best thing you can both do now, I think, is to go home to my hotel, and dine with me."

Neither of his companions, however, were disposed to do this. Carl Rosen did not feel that he should have discharged his duty, until he had ascertained with greater certainty, the real facts of the case. And George Rutherford had no appetite for dinner—no heart for social intercourse, until he had found out, to the remotest fraction, to what extent he had been defrauded. His purpose,

therefore, was to repair to the mercantile house where suspicion had first been awakened, and there busy himself until the depths of his calamity should be fully investigated.

In this way, then, they separated; and not until Jacob Law had reached the hotel and ordered a comfortable dinner before starting by the afternoon coach, did he recollect that the real purpose of his journey had not been even touched upon.

"Ah, well!" he mentally exclaimed, by way of consoling himself under this conviction — "There is a time for all things; and I much question whether the young man would have listened to me under present circumstances."

CHAPTER IX.

That little episode which had interrupted the uniform tenor of Lydia's experience, was not to pass entirely like the shadow over the landscape, without leaving any trace behind. Seldom, indeed, does anything which actually touches the human heart pass without some impress or bias of character remaining as its natural consequence. From causes which appear the most trivial and unimportant at the time, what changes in thought and feeling are sometimes wrought,—changes which we ourselves should be astonished at beholding, did not the rapid occurrence of succeeding facts tend somewhat to obliterate the impression, and thus confuse and entangle that unseen chain of associations by which alone such effects could be traced, each to its legitimate cause.

Lydia Law, like a true woman, or rather a woman true to herself and her own dignity, did not allow any hint or visible symptom to betray the illusion by which she had allowed herself to be partially deceived; and which she had cherished so fondly within the secret chambers of her heart. Perhaps she did not even acknowledge it entirely to herself; but so soon as she had recovered a little, entered earnestly and promptly into the subject of her cousin's engagement, as if she herself had been a party entirely unconcerned, only so far as it was natural to feel interest in her cousin's circumstances. Nor, in all probability, did Dora ever for a single moment suspect that the subject was otherwise than agreeable to them both, as they sat together and discussed the various branches and points of moment connected with this never tiring theme.

"I feel so vexed about one thing," said Dora, in the midst of an elaborate disquisition upon some article of dress—"That cousin William should have taken himself away just at this time. I cannot imagine what he should go abroad for, now, when I want his sage advice so much."

"Perhaps," suggested Lydia, "his advice might not be so easily obtained as asked for."

"Oh, but I know it would," replied Dora. "He may not exactly like that I should marry out, but since I choose to do so, I am quite sure he would help me through, if he was but here."

"I suppose the fine season tempted him to make this tour."

"It might be so; but I cannot help fancying there was some other reason, though I never could make out what. Perhaps it is my womanly curiosity that makes me want to know. I confess I should like to penetrate the coat of mail that he wears about his heart, and see for once what lies hidden there. It was so odd to go off in that sudden way."

"Yes, it was rather odd; when he seemed so taken up with the Mansfields, too."

"Oh, but their affairs are all settled; and really this change seems to have been a very happy one to them. Do thee know, Liddy, I begin quite to like Margaret Mansfield; and Alice, I think, the most interesting person I ever saw."

"The father is my favourite."

"Oh, Liddy! that meek faced man, with his hands folded, so"—

And the pretty speaker, as she said that, put herself into a very solemn attitude; but suddenly dropping, by the folding of her hands, a piece of lace with which they had been occupied, she was called back in an instant to the importance of present things, and returned to what she had been about with fresh animation and enjoyment.

Up to the time of which we write, the Society of Friends had never indulged in the wearing of lace. It seemed to be as if by universal agreement, a tacitly forbidden thing. All their allowed articles of the finest and clearest texture had insterstices of a square form left by rectangular threads. These muslins, sometimes of the most beautiful fabric, were selected with the greatest care, often paid for at a heavy price, and maintained in their clearness and perfection by a vast amount of trouble. So soon as a clear kind of fabric began to be manufactured with octagonal insterstices, though in this respect resembling lace, the bolder members of the Society ventured upon wearing this, because of its vast saving of expense and trouble; and from this innovation, a kind of stealthy process has been made, up to

the wearing, sometimes in the present day, of actual lace.

At the time in which we live, it is almost impossible to imagine the importance then attaching to such matters in private and social life; and this might be one of the reasons why the various preparations which Dora began so early to make for her intended marriage, possessed an interest which nothing could easily surpass. So many hitherto forbidden indulgencies, in the way of personal embellishment, were now not only lawful, but even appropriate, that there was no limit except that of her own excellent taste, to the elegance of her anticipated outfit. It is true it was too early now to commence any openly acknowledged preparations, but seldom was Lydia admitted into her cousin's private apartments without being permitted to inspect some delicate specimens of ribbons, lace, or other garniture, selected with the choicest care.

In justice to Lydia, it must be owned that she could not, under any circumstances, have gone the same length as her cousin in this kind of interest. Considerations of this kind always held with her a just, but inferior place; and especially now when she found it extremely difficult to share

her cousin's excitement, which, though exhibited in her natural way, only in the minor matters of life, had yet a deeper foundation of happiness within her own heart than any one listening to her often trifling talk would have given her credit for.

Thus it often happened that Lydia escaped from these private exhibitions a little weary; and for the very relief of her exhausted powers of attention, went wandering off into lonely walks, being much addicted about this time to solitary garden musings, and to gazing out of windows into the deepening twilight. It is the happy who turn invariably to the fire, forming in their social moments a kind of genial half circle, where the light of the blazing hearth is reflected upon faces bright with smiles—the melancholy look away into the darkness, rather than the light.

Thus Lydia sat sometimes when the family were present, forgetful of all within the room. When her father and sister returned from London, they were perhaps neither of them in a state of mind to observe that she did so, or to enquire the cause. But there was one who never failed to take secret cognisance of the fact, to whom the recently abstracted state of Lydia's mind was not altogether an impenetrable mystery, who had watched from

the first the growing interest excited by the stranger, and who was now able to pity from his very soul those feelings which at one time he had been disposed both to ridicule and condemn. How kindly we can look upon that which has no power to injure us!—how tenderly commiserate that which no longer stands in the way of our interest!

Never, perhaps, since their earliest acquaintance had Lydia been so interesting to Robert Moreton as now. She had always been lovely and attractive to him, perhaps beyond what any other woman ever could be; but now this secret sorrow made her almost sacred in his eyes. And since every hope on her part was excluded, he could revel in the luxury of sharing, though but in thought, with those soft and pensive feelings which made her more than beautiful to him.

Had Lydia cared to look around she might have detected the deep earnest gaze of a pair of magnificent dark eyes fixed steadily upon her profile, or her bending figure, as she leaned her head upon her hand in the attitude of deep and melancholy thought. But Robert had the good sense to keep the indulgence of this luxury to himself, and not even to approach too near, still less to attempt

openly to sympathise with the sadness in which it was impossible that he should really share.

One channel of sympathy there was, however, still left available to him; and at this time it became more so than ever before. The same tone of feeling which imparted to Lydia her peculiar taste for music, gave her also a taste for poetry, and a love of it in no ordinary degree. In this Robert Moreton was a much deeper enthusiast than herself, for Lydia always, and especially at the present time, indulged her taste almost exclusively in poetry of a sad, and sentimental nature; while Robert feasted on all that was really good, whatever its peculiar tendency might be. At this time, too, Lydia seemed especially to appropriate such poetry as conveyed the ideas of loneliness, blight, waste of treasured feeling, sunset hues of fading hope, or even the tempest beating on the brow, and the desolation of the heart and feelings in general.

Most fortunately for those who prized this luxury, Moore and Byron were at this time amongst the ruling stars in the world of English poetry. Other brilliant stars unquestionably shone beside them, but Moore, and especially Byron, seemed ever most to attract the sympathies of

those who were a little sad, a little morbid, and perhaps a little selfish too. It is true there were many lines of Moore extremely valued, and often dwelt upon by the same class of readers, such as those beginning with the well known words—

> "Oh! ever thus from childhood's hour
> I've seen my fondest hopes decay."

And these Lydia repeated to herself mentally when in company, and audibly when alone in the garden or fields, until they began to feel to her like the natural language she was born to utter; while the more select passages of Byron, which alone had been allowed to reach her, had also the power to rivet her attention, and excite her feelings, beyond anything else in the form of literature which had ever met her eye.

It must not, however, be supposed that these poems were an allowed, and still less an approved indulgence. Stolen joys they were; and perhaps for this reason they might be all the sweeter. Robert Moreton was a beautiful, or rather a deeply feeling reader, and sometimes when the other members of the family were differently occupied, and he and Lydia were left alone, he was allowed the high privilege of reading to her some choice passages from the poems which he was always

ready to purchase as soon as they were published.

In this manner there grew between the two a certain kind of intimacy, limited in its expansion, but very deep. Besides his reading, Robert had a wonderfully retentive memory, and could recite what he remembered with great pathos, and expression. And thus often when Lydia would have turned a deaf ear to his conversation, she listened with unbroken interest while he repeated whole cantoes of Childe Harold, or other poems which could scarcely have found a safe place, in any visible form, under the roof of Jacob Law.

In this manner, too, Robert came by degrees to be the allowed companion of many of Lydia's walks. We easily tolerate whatever ministers unobtrusively but constantly to our enjoyment. About this time she had frequently to go to her Aunt Greenfell's, and as the autumn advanced, the evenings closed in so rapidly, that Robert was sometimes requested to go and escort her safely home; and sometimes he ventured to go for that purpose without being asked.

Together too, they sometimes visited the cottage, for such had been the happy effects upon the invalid of the change to that peaceful home, that Alice now occasionally joined the family cir-

cle, sharing to a certain extent, the social pleasures enjoyed by her friends. With the interruption now and then of a few days of suffering, during which she kept her own room, her time was passed in a state of comparative comfort and repose, the cheerful companionship of her sister affording her a never failing source of amusement.

But as the mind and character of Alice Mansfield had ever been capable of greater heights and depths than those of ordinary mould experience, so she was by no means insensible to the refined and elevating enjoyments which literature is capable of affording. Hence, the books which Robert Moreton sent her, when judiciously chosen, and sometimes his own reading or reciting, afforded her extreme pleasure, at those times when she felt strong enough to bear the excitement, with which such pleasure is necessarily accompanied.

Besides this, there was something in Robert's own character, appearance, and manner, which rendered him peculiarly interesting to her; so that when their acquaintance ripened, as it gradually did, into intimacy, he became a sort of regularly established guest at the cottage, welcomed, not only for his quiet and intelligent conversation, but even more so for his brotherly

kindness, which was always finding delicate and unobtrusive ways of making itself felt, without being felt too much.

Margaret Mansfield enjoyed this pleasant intercourse, perhaps even more for her sister's sake, than for her own. Two sisters situated as they were, with a father whose sensitive feelings, and mind so often wrapped in silent and uncommunicable meditations, rendered him but little capable of affording help either to himself or others, needed especially the services of one who could stand with them in the relation of a brother; and now that William Greenfell was gone, they began to wonder that they had not earlier discovered the true value of the friend who remained. Under the circumstances, too, in which one so ill as Alice was placed, there could be no scruple of delicacy in asking little kindnesses even at the hands of a young man, and especially one so affectionate and unsophisticated, so naturally delicate, and truly refined as Robert Moreton; so that Margaret, as well as her sister, learned in time to feel entirely at ease when receiving from him that kind attention or assistance which she knew was prompted by a brotherly feeling, and nothing more.

It is possible that Alice saw a little more deeply

into his heart and mind than her sister, because she had naturally more sympathy with such a character—with its morbid sensibility, with its impassioned but silent enthusiasm, and its hidden depths both of intellect and feeling. It was impossible to look into his large dark eyes without seeing something of this—at least it was impossible to one constituted like Alice Mansfield, but whenever she did so, a sensation like fear took possession of her, troubling her repose with vague apprehensions of what such a nature might have to suffer, and in all probability *would* suffer before the merciful design of all human suffering could be fully accomplished with regard to him. Too well did she know—too deeply feel, what such suffering, though still merciful, *could* be; and thus it was that she used to speak so kindly to the young man, sometimes holding out her thin white hand to him, and grasping his so tenderly, that the tears would steal into his eyes, for his fond heart had long been yearning for this gentle sympathy, and to find it now just on the borders of the grave in which it must so soon be buried, and thus lost to him for ever!—this thought it was that so often forced into his eyes the tears he was obliged to turn away to hide.

This little party were seated in the cottage one day, enjoying through the window wreathed with jesamine, the clear moonlight of a lovely September evening, when Robert Moreton, almost involuntarily, began to repeat one of Byron's melodies, beginning with—

"If that high world which lies beyond," &c., &c.

There was nothing in these lines to awaken any other than the most calm and chastened feelings, and a silence followed only interrupted by Alice asking him to go on, or select some other passage; adding that she always fancied moonlight was not the light to talk by, but rather to think, and feel; and that listening to verses repeated or read, was like listening to the music of some murmuring stream; it was even more peaceful than total silence.

Directed by his natural delicacy, and tenderness of feeling, Robert made very happy and appropriate selections that evening, and went on for some time; and such was the agreeable sense of repose which this amusement afforded to the invalid, that on separating, Robert asked if he might bring an entire poem with him on the following evening and read to the little party while they worked.

The sisters cordially assented, and Lydia also said how much she should enjoy it.

"But," said Alice, "you must come to tea, and let us have a nice long evening. I am so much better just now, that you need not be at all afraid of tiring me."

Accordingly it was agreed between Robert and Lydia that Lord Byron's "Corsair" should be the poem. Carried away by his own enthusiasm, Robert fancied that the beauty of the poetry would overpower whatever might be objectionable in the sentiment.

It was so to a great extent with himself, and he forgot, for the moment, that an invalid, weakened by long suffering, might not retain the mental power necessary for separating the good from the evil.

At an early hour the little gathering at the cottage took place, and most thoroughly were all prepared to enjoy the social meeting. Tea was soon dispatched, and when Lydia and Margaret had taken up their work, after seeing that Alice was placed in the most comfortable position on the couch; and after they had each charged her not to mind interrupting the reading if she wanted anything, or found it fatiguing, Robert, a proud and

and happy man, opened his volume of poetry, and began to read.

At first the extraordinary privilege of his situation seemed almost too much for his nervous susceptibility ; but he soon forgot himself entirely in the interest and deep beauty of what he read ; and thus his voice, with its rich and flexible tones, was able to do justice to all the varied passages, whether of boldness, or melancholy, majesty or pathos.

To Margaret Mansfield it was scarcely possible to become so absorbed in any book, or in any pleasure, as to cease to think of her sister; and often did her enquiring eye glance anxiously towards the couch, to see if Alice was still drinking in those draughts of deep enjoyment which it was evident the poem at first afforded.

Alice was reclining with her face towards the little party seated at the table, so that every change of her countenance could be distinctly seen ; and if ever there was a face whose contour and expression could be described as in perfect harmony with the spirit and the tone of Byron's poetry, it was that which Margaret watched so thoughtfully, yet only at intervals, and by stolen glances.

Although Margaret had at first been struck

with the ineffable delight, almost amounting to rapture, which was depicted on her sister's countenance, her quick eye became sensible, after a while, of certain shades of trouble passing over it, and once or twice she rose, and whispering to her sister, asked if she was in pain. But Alice answered rather as if she did not wish to be disturbed; so Margaret sat down to her work again, and the reading went on. Soon, however, she became convinced, without a doubt, that all was not well with Alice. As the light of day declined the moon rose, and it might in fact be that which gave to her countenance a hue of deadly paleness. But beyond this, Margaret felt sure that her sister's eyes were filled with tears, and, rising hastily, she first laid her hand upon the open book to indicate that the reader must be still, and then stooping over her sister she whispered to her again.

This time there was no answer, but a fit of heavy weeping, such as distressed those who listened to it beyond measure; though it was in reality no more than the natural relief of over-burdened feelings, deprived by physical weakness of their accustomed restraint.

The tears which had so painfully affected her friends, were soon dried by their united kindness;

and the heavy sobs abated, though not without having severely shaken the poor shattered frame. Time was gladly afforded for composure, the little party remaining very still, until Alice should be able to speak, or if she preferred it, to let them retire without speaking; and thus, after a little quiet, she began again to speak, and smile, saying how very foolish she had been, and how sorry she felt to have so disturbed the pleasure of the evening.

"The fact is," she added, "it was *too* pleasant at first. I must not have that book read to me again, nor, I think, any of Byron's poetry. It shakes me too much, and brings no repose. It re-opens old wounds, and brings no healing."

"Robert," she said, holding out her hand to him, "Is that thy favourite reading?"

"I am afraid it is," he answered.

"Ah! I do not wonder. Once it would indeed have been mine. But take care. There is much suffering that must necessarily be endured in this world—much that is salutary, or might be salutary. But the suffering which Byron's poety awakens, if it does not absolutely cause it, is not necessary, and it does not seem to me likely to be salutary. When I speak of suffering, I am not

insensible to the pleasure—I might say, the deep and rare enjoyment it affords. But just in proportion as it sometimes elevates the soul, fires the imagination, and bathes the feelings in ineffable delight, does it not plunge us all the deeper in darkness, anguish, and despair?

"Dear friend—dear brother, bear with this from me, and think of it sometimes when I am gone. Do not go home now and grieve over having read this book to me. I am really glad that I have heard so much of it. Indeed, it was very kind of thee to read it to us, and to read it so beautifully too. But for myself I am a poor weak creature, and cannot bear much now. It seems to me that I am just resting alone in my shattered boat upon the calm sea shore, waiting for the pilot to come and guide me over. And oh! what a mercy that the waves are calm; for I know what the tempest is, with all its raging billows, and rough winds. And therefore it is, perhaps, that I dare not listen to anything which even tends to ruffle these waves again. Poor coward that I am, I dare not look back to the rocks and precipices which frown above, nor down into the depths that lie below. No, no. I want

peace and safety now—that peace which the world can neither give, nor take away.

"Farewell, dear friends. Your company has been very pleasant, but I feel that I must now endeavour to find a little rest."

CHAPTER X.

Although Jacob Law was so anxious again to reach his home, that his natural impatience of delay was excited by every little hindrance which threatened to prolong his stay in London, it cannot be supposed, when at last he had the satisfaction of entering his own door, that he was altogether a happy man. No, there was still a heavy burden on his heart, which nothing but an entire and happy reconciliation with his son could altogether remove.

It is more than probable that during his stay in London, and on his journey home, he often pleased himself with thinking that Reuben had but said those words in a moment of angry excitement, and so would perhaps come back to his mother when she was left alone.

With this strong conviction the father entered his house, and actually looked around for Reuben's

face amongst those who welcomed the traveller's return. He could not ask for him; it would be too painful to be told that he had never come back since that distressing night. But while silent on this subject, the father thought he could discover in every countenance a kind of blank, which told him more plainly than words that his son was gone, and perhaps gone for ever. And that awful whisper came again which he had heard so often in the sleepless watches of the night, telling him that his own angry words were possibly the cause.

That the father's suspicions on this sad occasion had been as unjust as they were injurious and insulting to his son, he had been fully assured by his daughter Susannah, who, though incommunicable on other subjects, and very silent during the whole journey, had once roused herself in the night, and when she and her father were alone, to say that she could not rest without endeavouring to do her brother justice in one respect, and that was his innocence of all connection with that woman, who had only sought him for the purpose of asking his assistance in a case of difficulty.

"Who is the woman, then?" asked Jacob Law, very naturally.

Susannah started; but quickly recovering herself, replied—"She is a desolate creature, deserted by one whom Reuben used to know, and she came to him in her distress."

"Ah! well," said Jacob Law, by no means satisfied. "The present seems to be a season full of mysteries. I suppose I must wait. So don't put thyself to any unnecessary pain or trouble, Susannah, for I can wait very well; and if Reuben is really innocent in this matter, I don't know but I may be able to offer him the hand of reconciliation."

This was all that passed on the subject, but it was enough to re-awaken those parental feelings in the father's heart which were never really absent, only at times might be hidden under an aspect of severity; for it so happened that the faults and follies of his luckless son, were exactly those for which Jacob Law had naturally the least amount of sympathy, and consequently the least toleration.

Finding then that he had been mistaken, and feeling that he had been wrong, an eager, but at the same time a tender yearning filled his heart, to unburden itself of all those painful self-upbraidings with which the recollection of one's own

harshness and injustice is always accompanied; and especially he longed to do this with assurances of kindly feeling towards his son, such as he hoped might win him back again within the circle of his family, and make him feel that in his father's house he had the truest welcome upon earth.

But as already said, the name of Reuben was not mentioned; and when Jacob Law heard in private from his wife that no intelligence respecting him had reached them, and found that she herself had been building upon the hope that he might have followed his father and sister to London, an alarm so serious took possession of his mind, that he went immediately to the confidential clerk under whose roof Reuben had already been kindly sheltered, trusting to learn some further particulars from him.

In this respect the father had calculated rightly. Reuben Law possessed, in no common degree, that often unaccountable peculiarity which made him never know what it was to be without a friend. To some extent it was a misfortune that he never had a want which some one was not willing to supply—scarcely a wish that was not from some quarter or other promptly and cheerfully gratified. In the present instance, not all the trouble which

he had so recently occasioned the worthy man and his quiet household, stood for a moment in the way of any after welcome he might choose to claim; so that when he presented himself immediately after the distressing interview with his father, he was cordially invited again to become an inmate of that humble dwelling. That night he came no more, but on the following morning he presented himself, and even remained during part of the day, arranging plans for proceeding to London, where, he said, he intended to take a situation, and work his way in the world, without ever troubling his own family again. Of course, in such an enterprise, it was impossible to embark without some funds; and a small sum of money had been advanced by the clerk, which he was well assured in his own mind would be repaid by the family, though, it is quite possible that even without this assurance, he would have done the same.

With this, which, after all, was a slender provision, the young man had set out that very afternoon for London. The clerk related faithfully all the particulars to Jacob Law, omitting only those violent and indignant expressions relating to his father, in which the young man had unsparingly indulged.

Jacob Law listened thoughtfully to this recital. He was calm now, and much softened in his feelings towards his son. What he seemed most to regret was that he should have gone off in this unprotected, unprovided manner, when he himself could have supplied him with so many introductions to Friends' families, where his welfare would have been cared for; and to more than one, where he might possibly have been lodged and boarded so as to be kept out of harm's way.

"But I will write to him," said Jacob, after taking some time for silent meditation.

"Ah!" said the clerk, "that is what I most regret, that nothing I could say—and I tried my very utmost—could induce the young man to give me any address where he might be found. All I could obtain from him was a promise that he would write to me if he found himself in any kind of difficulty. This he did promise me again and again."

Jacob Law had started at this intelligence, and his countenance immediately assumed an aspect of such deep and painful anxiety, that the man went on to palliate and excuse, and even to forebode better things for the future. But this was not what the father wanted just at that moment, and

it seemed to fall upon a deaf ear; for he wanted some immediate channel of communication with his son. He wanted to see him—to speak to him—to throw his arms around him, if nothing else would bring him back again; and here he found himself deprived of the very power of reaching him by letter!

During the time of listening to the good man's recital, Jacob Law had been glancing in idea at the sort of letter he would write. He had persuaded himself that, after all, it would be better, or at least easier, to write than to speak. Words were but air.—Would that the words he last uttered to his son were nothing more! But a letter! Oh! he would fill it with such assurances of unabated affection!—he would speak so closely, yet so kindly—so strongly, yet so tenderly! And then the letter would remain perhaps to be referred to in moments of weakness or dejection; or even, if disregarded now, it might be taken up again and read perhaps on some future day, with calmer feelings, and judgment more open to receive the truth.

Such had been the father's thoughts, which, though rushing hastily through his mind, had yet left their impress of comfort, hope, and satisfac-

tion, not to be thus suddenly and forcibly obliterated without the most poignant suffering. Never before had the father's head been bowed, or his spirit in any degree broken by any outward or tangible calamity. All the discipline he had thus far endured, had been in secret between his soul, and his Maker. Before his Heavenly Father he had bowed often, and sometimes very low ; but never before to man. Yet, when Jacob Law retired from this interview, he looked an older man by ten years, than he had done a few weeks before.

Indeed, such was the state of things altogether at the Grange, that while the routine of family and social intercourse still went on with but very little variation; while even Susannah fell into her usual habits, going only just a little more silently about the house than formerly; yet a certain indescribable shadow waa diffused over all the intercourse, and all the pursuits of that once cheerful circle, just as if some unseen hand had dealt with the domestic scene in a manner like that of the painter, who after giving to every object on his canvas its exact form, its bright tints, or its appropriate colouring, then draws a veil of sober grey over the whole, thus leaving the distinctive characteristics still the same, while the whole is

changed, yet changed so imperceptibly, that no one unacquanted with the art could tell how or why.

It happened at this time, and to some of the family it was a most welcome event, that one of those important visits was about to take place, by which the friends, as a social community, are sometimes stirred up from their monotony and stagnation, to a livelier sense of the vital principles of true religion in the soul, than would seem to be easily maintained by any community without such seasons of awakening, by whatever means they may be brought about. In all religious associations, emersed as mankind now are in their business occupations, it is but too frequently the case, that the outward form of religion alone obtains attention, the spirit or the life being dormant. Hence there results a most unprofitable state of mental and spiritual stagnation, which those understand but too well who tread the path of secluded and isolated existence, such as was formerly that of a large portion of the religious body whose social habits afford the materials for this picture. In the largest towns, and amidst the more active pursuits of life, the religious spirit might be equally languid, or even

more so; but just in proportion as members of the Society congregate together, there will generally be more ministers in the different meetings, and consequently more frequent opportunities for the revival of that warmth of feeling, which, if not really amounting to life, bears strong evidence of a living principle within.

In secluded country places it frequently happens that a place of worship is regularly attended for many consecutive months without a word being uttered to break the silence. But still, even then, these silent waiting people are not forgotten. The remotest dwelling, the least accessible household, the troubled family, or even the solitary individual scarcely knowing what is meant by intercourse with the world, are all included in the kindly interest of the Society of Friends at large; and especially by those whose mission calls them to go forth with that distinct message from on high, which can in no way be restrained without disobedience, and to which no human wisdom, still less any human wish, can affix a boundary, or even direct in the course it shall pursue. Each member of the Society of Friends has thus the satisfaction of feeling to be one of a brotherhood of love and kindness; and

when to this universal fellowship is added the fact that all their poor are maintained in comfort and respectability by their own body; and not only maintained, but educated, and then helped forward as their need may be; we cease to wonder, as otherwise we might, that for so many years this singular and exclusive people should have held on their peaceful and harmonious way, united like one large family or clan, and by this means strengthening and supporting each other, at times when everything in the outer world has appeared adverse to their temporal interests.

The great question remains to be proved, whether they did not really prosper more as a religious community when they were a scorn and a bye-word amongst the people than in later years, when they have enjoyed their full share of worldly consideration, and have known, perhaps a little too well, that their external peculiarities, instead of being treated with ridicule and contempt, have been really a passport to the respect and confidence of the world at large.

The occasion already alluded to, was that of a religious visit from one of those highly gifted individuals, of whom the Society of Friends have recognized no inferior proportion amongst their

members. Caroline Grey was a woman who would have commanded respect and attention in any society, nor could she have mixed on familiar terms with young persons of any denomination, or any class, without winning, even by her looks and manners, a large amount of that enthusiastic admiration which has its real foundation in love—love excited, and love bestowed. It was not so much in any intellectual superiority that this wonderful charm—this power over feeling and character was to be found, as in the combination of a graceful and courteous manner, sweet voice, majestic figure, and beyond and above all, that deep womanly sympathy that was ever ready for the use of all, provided only their claims upon it were real. Of all pretence and all assumption, Caroline Grey was a stern reprover; and if the natural gentleness of her countenance, and softness of her voice, would scarcely have borne her out in administering necessary reproof, there was a dignity so nearly sublime in her figure, her deportment, and her general appearance, that folly shrank abashed before her, and vanity was fain to hide its diminished head.

But it is not possible, by any description, to do justice to a character so constituted of the higher

and the finer elements of human nature, yet so restrained, subdued, and governed, in every word and action by a perfect discrimination of that most delicate of all distinctions, by which a female Friend is what she is, and nothing else.

What we have most to do with, just now, is the public ministry of this remarkable woman.

Even in her case, as well as in others, it must be confessed that her utterance was marked by a considerable amount of the peculiar tone or cadence which, from a voice so musical in all its changes, was by no means unpleasant. Indeed, it rather resembled a kind of chanting, and in this way rose and fell with soft undulatory movement. not more disturbing than the lulling swell of a summer sea. With these sweet tones, sometimes soft and silvery, sometimes high and almost seraphic, at other times low and mellow; and with a natural easy flow of words, so correct in their selection, and so appropriate in their use, that a highly cultivated mind might be recognised in every sentence; there was yet another source of influence derived from a higher cause, and to this it is but just to attribute that wonderful power by which sometimes a whole meeting seemed to be moved by the public addresses of this valued minister.

Nor was her private intercourse, especially with the young, less influential. On the occasion of her present visit, no sooner had she reached the Grange, than she entered into kind and feeling inquiries respecting Alice Mansfield, with whose character and state of health she appeared to be fully acquainted; and when some surprise was expressed that she should know so much of one who had always been rather backward to seek the intimacy of Friends, she replied, in a thoughtful manner,—"I knew her mother well. She was one of my earliest, and dearest friends."

This was a little lesson for Rebecca Law, who appeared to receive the unintentional rebuke with some surprise; for up to this time she had never been really cordial with the invalid, but had looked upon her rather in the light of a somewhat dangerous acquaintance for her own children. The visitor did more than enquire. She expressed a wish, if it was suitable, to go almost immediately to the cottage, in order that she might early enjoy an interview, which she had evidently been anticipating with considerable interest.

Alice Mansfield herself was quite ignorant of the kindly feeling with which she was regarded.

She had heard the name, and might have seen the face of this friend of her early life; but so many rough waves had washed over her since then, that there were few traces remaining in her memory of more than a friend whom her mother often spoke of with affection.

On the part of Caroline Grey, the memory of those days was still distinct, though there had been an almost entire cessation of all personal intercourse with the family, for she was herself a woman of great public activity and benevolence, taking a practical as well as influential part in many institutions not confined to her own denomination. Besides this, her time had been much occupied in visits, and journeys of a religious nature, both to America and various parts of the continent of Europe; so that the family of her early friend had passed entirely out of the range of her personal acquaintance, not out of her memory; for learning by the messenger who had been dispatched, that the invalid felt well enough to receive her, she asked Susannah to walk with her to the cottage; and she who had always been most faithful in her attentions and kindness to the Mansfields, was glad to be the chosen companion of so agreeable a visitor.

Although Alice had been carefully prepared for this visit, yet her cheeks were flushed, her eyes bright, and her hand very trembling, as she waited and listened for the approaching footsteps. To her the visit of a ministering friend had more in it to awaken alarm than to soothe, so seldom had she been treated by them hitherto with that tender and confiding sympathy which she might have enjoyed to almost any extent, had her appearance, manners, and general deportment been, to use their own expressions, "More consistent with the principles of Friends." Thus, not her pulse only, but her very breath fluttered, as she thought she heard the rustling of stiff skirts in the doorway. Soon, however, a voice of such indescribable sweetness caught her ear, that she ventured to look round, and there she saw a female figure as attractive as the voice, gliding with almost noiseless motion into the room. Susannah was the first to take her outstretched hand, and, stooping down, she whispered—"I have brought a kind friend to see thee."

Alice made an effort to move, and speak courteously, in order to receive her visitor as a guest ought to be received; but Margaret immediately stepped to her side to relieve her as much as possible from any duty.

The interview thus agreeably begun was pleasant to all, and profoundly interesting to some of the party. Gilbert Mansfield entered while the visitor remained, and though he seldom on ordinary occasions spoke of his past life, he also was beguiled, by the revival of the acquaintance, into a conversation more frank, cordial, and confiding, than he had indulged in for many years.

As this revival of old times, and old memories, was going on, Caroline Grey drew Margaret to her side, and, with one arm round her waist, sate gazing alternately at one sister and then the other, recalling former looks which she recognised in them, and thus gaining their confidence by the simple and unpremeditated exercise of that motherly feeling with which she regarded them, and to which they had so long been strangers.

But, fraught with deep interest as this communion was, the interview was not thus to close. A most appropriate silence seemed to steal into the room, and there the little party sate together, with their full hearts each laid bare before the all-seeing eye. At last the voice of deep and earnest prayer broke through the stillness—softly and faintly at first, and then so solemnly, that no pealing organ, nor swell of chanting voices,

would have sunk so deeply into the soul, as that low prayer breathed from a woman's lips.

And thus they parted, without many words, after that sweet prayer. "It was so soothing," Alice said, that night before she slept, "so elevating, yet so full of human sympathy, as well as heavenly love."

The following day was occupied in a much more public manner. In the morning a meeting was held in their own place of worship for the Friends who usually assembled there; and in the evening at the same place, there was a public meeting, which was numerously attended. On both occasions Caroline Grey was the principal speaker, although accompanied in her labours of love by a Friend, who was also a minister.

It was especially the gift of this eminent woman to address her ministrations to particular states of mind or feeling, which many believed to be revealed to her in an almost miraculous manner. But, at the same time that she did this, she most carefully avoided all such expressions as might tend to specify any particular object of address, or to induce any unprofitable enquiries as to who the individual pointed at might be. Nor in private life was it her practice to meddle with family

matters, unless distinctly and intentionally brought before her; although she would often throw in a word of sympathy or advice which plainly revealed that she was not a stranger to the hopes or difficulties, the joys or sorrows, of those around her.

The morning meeting had been a peculiarly solemn one, such as might well prepare the hearts of all present, both old and young, to meet for the evening with expectations raised to no common height. A large assemblage of people were gathered at an early hour, consisting chiefly of the poorer classes; amongst whom, however, great order prevailed; for such is the power of that stillness which pervades a multitude—such even where but a few are met together for purposes of worship, that no person of common taste or feeling would choose to disturb the solemnity, even if they felt no graver motives for conforming to the general rule. The burden of the address on this occasion was the Prodigal Son. Alas! where was he who should have heard those solemn yet cheering words?

Daylight had not quite departed when the meeting gathered, but soon the shades of evening stole over the mute assembly, and then the moon —the clear autumn moon, shone in through the

windows, for the old place was dimly lighted within, and no single countenance could be distinguished amongst the many, only the tall figure of the speaker standing forth, fair and majestic, with her head uncovered, and sometimes her white hand raised as in the attitude of denouncing terror, or inspiring hope.

Well it was for one who sat in that assembly, and listened with no common feeling, that the lights in the old place were dim, and that the attention of the audience was so concentrated, that the expression of his mental agony, if stamped upon his countenance, could not be seen. "*My* poor prodigal!" was the language of the father's soul. "Oh! when will he return?" Again and again were the parental arms almost on the point of being stretched out, to meet only a shadow.

Yet there was something—Jacob Law felt sure there was the figure of a man at one time leaning against the wall beside the door, and in the very outskirts of the assembly. His hat was drawn low down, and his dress raised high about his throat, so that scarcely any portion of his face could be seen. No; it was not Reuben, and could not be. And yet if it should be really that poor wandering erring child, and if that night

should be one of blessed reconciliation, and re-admission into the paternal fold? What thoughts were these for a father, as he sat gazing, sometimes into vacancy, sometimes almost springing from his seat in the full belief that his son was there!

The assembly broke up as it had gathered, with great order and seriousness. Jacob Law betrayed no outward sign of the disturbing thoughts which had occupied his mind. He did not hasten to the door though his eye involuntarily glanced in that direction, but kept his seat until the company was dispersed, in the highest place, among that class of friends least likely to be moved by the going out or coming in of others; nor did he communicate to any one the impression, which, however, had only passed over his own mind suddenly, and at intervals, leaving behind it an abiding conviction that his son was not really present, only that image of him which the father's heart was always painting, and especially where he most wished him to be. Thus, in preparing to return home, he was able to give the same amount of attention as usual to the different parties to be accommodated, and which, on that occasion, were too numerous for the carriages, so that some had

to walk. Gilbert Mansfield and Margaret were now amongst the number, and with his usually thoughtful kindness, Jacob Law would not be satisfied without seeing them safely placed in a conveyance which he had engaged for the occasion. Margaret would gladly have walked, but finding herself lifted upon the step of the carriage by Jacob Law, she knew too well his rapid and decisive method of disposing of people, to dispute his will in the disposal of herself. Some of his own family were left amongst the walkers, but this was no unpleasant alternative, the evening being particularly calm and beautiful, and the moon shining in the heaveus without a cloud.

Although Caroline Grey was a woman of so delicate a mind, that she would have shrunk from approaching uninvited, even the boundary line of social and individual confidence, yet being gifted with an extraordinary amount of natural penetration, as well as sympathy, she seemed to possess, as already said, a kind of intuitive knowledge of those by whom she was surrounded. In the case of Susannah Law it was impossible that she should have obtained any information through ordinary channels respecting the sad history by which her inner life was just now so deeply shadowed.

Even her father knew but little of the details of this history, for he had faithfully kept his promise, and waited her own time for further explanations, if, indeed, that time should ever come. It could not, therefore, be the exact circumstances of her situation which so deeply moved the feelings of the visitor towards this uncomplaining sufferer. Yet so it was, that she appeared to be drawn in an especial manner towards Susannah. She did not speak to her much—perhaps there was little need for words; but on all occasions she evinced a desire to have her near. If she walked, being already subject to some slight infirmity, she would have Susannah's arm to lean upon; and when retiring to her room at night, she asked Susannah to accompany her. On the evening after the meeting, she would have Susannah beside her in the carriage. And thus it was, in fact, that Lydia was left to walk home by moonlight—with whom?

Of course with Robert Moreton, for who but he should be ever ready to take his place by her side, whenever he could do so without obtrusiveness; and by this time he had learned to understand, with some precision, how and when to offer his services. He had learned also, what was no

pleasant lesson, how scornfully an ill timed act or word could be repelled; and he knew better than to bring this heavy punishment upon himself again. At least he thought he did.

That sentimental kind of intimacy between the young which has a little poetry, a little sadness, and a little self for its basis, has already been described; and without enquiring philosophically into its nature, Robert was too well pleased that a bond did really exist between him and Lydia, to enquire whether it was secured against being snapped asunder by any circumstance possible or likely to occur. Sufficient for him, up to this time, had been the conviction that such a bond there was, and that no one present was likely to interrupt this pleasant intercourse.

But there was, deeply buried in the heart and character of this young man, a perfect mine of purer, nobler, and even bolder aspirations, than ever yet had found so much as utterance; still less liberty, and power of action. He was, in fact, one of those sincere, but dreamy enthusiasts, who awake only at intervals; and then, looking around upon the wants and the miseries of human nature, conceive the most glorious hopes, and construct the most benevolent designs, for the ame-

lioration of human misery, and the emancipation of the great family of man from the thraldom of ignorance, and prejudice, folly, and vice.

Such had ever been the tendency of Robert Moreton's character, thus to awake, and behold,—to fashion to himself these great and noble projects, and then, because he found no sympathy, and had no fellow-worker, to sleep or rather dream again. And this he did at such long intervals, that few amongst his friends were at all sure that the depths of his soul were ever filled with more than poetry.

Like many other enthusiasts, he deeply felt this want of sympathy; and, like many enthusiasts of his sex, he believed that this was to be found in woman; if not in woman's love, at least in her sisterly affection. And perhaps—was it possible so great a blessing could be in store for him?—Perhaps he thought he had at last found it in the lovely companion who walked so silently beside him on that moonlight night.

Lydia Law, like many other members of her family, had just now her own incommunicable source of sadness, and her mind, like the rest, was exactly in that state which is most capable of

being moved by any solemn or affecting appeal. Perhaps she now beheld her own folly, and thus felt her own cross the more severely. Perhaps she was pained by the idea that she had been to some extent false to the love of her father's household, and the tender and careful nurture of her childhood. At all events, she became sensible at this time, more perhaps than ever before, of the inestimable privileges of that carefully protected walk, in which she had been so fondly led from childhood up to the present time; and something of a tender yearning accompanied these feelings, that she might come back, like a stray lamb, into the fold, never to depart again, even in fancy or desire.

And, oh! if she could live to be—if she dared hope that she should ever be—a pillar in that church whose beauty she now beheld with newly opened eyes! Why not?—a voice seemed whispering to her heart—why not become a Friend in earnest?—in heart and life, a Friend? And being such, why not aspire to the upholding of a true standard of real principle? letting go some of the trifling and external matters, only to hold more firmly and consistently by those which lie at the foundation of all pure and exalted Christianity.

Such were the thoughts and the feelings of these two youthful companions as they trod the dewy grass that night. But for two so young, and so familiar in their daily intercourse, it was less easy to speak to each other on these deep subjects than might have been supposed. Their hearts were full—perhaps *too* full for speech. It was the woman at last, who, stopping suddenly, and looking up to the man, said, with clasped hands and earnest countenance, "Oh! I do wish that I could live for something better than this endless trifling! I never felt before as I do now. It seems to me as if an angel had been sent amongst us, to rouse us out of our supineness and forgetfulness. Ah! if these feelings would but last, what things we might accomplish!—what blessings we might be!"

These were exactly the words to touch the electric chain of feeling in the mind and heart of her companion, and he also then could find language for his thoughts—language so eloquent and thrilling, that Lydia looked into his face, and, for the first time in her life, it was beautiful to her. It was more beautiful, because at that moment it wore no character of earthly feeling; nor was it love that fired his eye and made his lips so

fluent, and his words so full of meaning — not human love at least, but that deep pathos and exalted sentiment, which thrill through all the nerves of being, wakening long dormant energies, and touching all the latent elements of life with fire.

What was it which, in an instant, had thus transformed this silent, dreamy youth, into an orator—a hero? Ah! if we could always live up to our capabilities, and if those powers which thus sometimes, in an unexpected moment, awake to live and burn within us, could in youth be dedicated to the highest and the holiest purposes, and so kept sacred to our Master's service, how wide would be the range of man's existence—how rich the experience of each passing hour!

In this exalted state of mind, and scarcely seeming to tread the common earth, the two companions reached their home. There was another tie between them now. Was this to be the binding one?

CHAPTER XI.

Amongst the numbers who appeared to Susannah Law to have a greater claim than herself upon the attention of their guest, she shrunk from bringing forward any conversation bearing even the remotest reference to her own state of mind, and circumstances; otherwise it would have been an unspeakable consolation to her, could she have ventured so far as to speak to one so experienced, even of trials in some way resembling her own.

But the morning came on which the guests were to depart; and Susannah had still borne only a passive share in the pleasant intercourse of these memorable days. The morning came, and it was remarkably bright and fine. The carriage was already at the door, and there were many kind farewells exchanged, and many affectionate

parting words amongst the friendly group who stood about, all eager to be the recipient of some last token of esteem or kindness.

It now appeared that even Caroline Grey was not so exalted as to be above all womanly weaknesses, and one of these was a morbid sensibility to all oppression or cruelty to animals, a peculiarity which it must be owned was sometimes the cause of a little trouble to her friends. As she stood at the door on this occasion, and looked towards the steep hill side, along which the road lead upwards from the valley, she asked if that was the way they were about to travel. Being told that it was, she said, smiling to Susannah, who stood beside her — "Then do come with me, please; and let us walk up the hill together. It will relieve the horses, and I shall enjoy the pure fresh air."

Every one of course was ready at this suggestion to offer an arm, or an umbrella, or anything else that might be serviceable. But the Friend stepped on so quickly, leaning upon the arm of Susannah, who happened to be dressed for going out, that, those who were so ready with their services, felt they could do no more without being obtrusive.

Susannah's heart beat fast when she found herself thus selected from the party, and alone, perhaps for the last time in her life, with one respecting whom she felt that if any human being could minister consolation in her time of need, it would be the companion who now addressed her in tones as tender as if she had been a mother speaking to her child. While, however, Susannah felt this, to its full extent, she was still the same silent incommunicable being as before; and perhaps would have allowed the walk to have terminated without a word of more than common civility, had not her friend addressed her as one under deep and peculiar trial, even deviating so far from her usual habits as to ask directly if it was not so.

"It is, indeed!" replied Susannah.

"But, my dear," continued her companion, "thou art not a stranger to the one source of comfort, under every trial."

"I hope not;" replied Susannah, "but there are wounds of a nature which, it seems to me, must necessarily preclude their being brought to the fount of healing."

"My dear child, what trials, or wounds can these be?"

"Those of which sin constitutes the bitterness."

"Nay, surely, this is a morbid view to take."

"I am afraid I cannot make my meaning understood; but suppose one was closely—intimately associated with sin—suppose, in short, that one should love a sinful person, not knowing it, and then——"

"Ah! now, I understand thee; and I say to thee, that if by that love thou meanest the true devoted love, such as a wife should cherish for her husband——"

"I do."

"Then strip it from thee like a filthy garment!"

"I have."

"Then raise thy head in thankfulness to Him who knows the conflict, and the cost."

"I have done that too."

"And hast thou not found peace?"

"Not yet."

"Why not? poor child."

"I cannot forget."

"Nor should'st thou. It is sometimes more profitable to remember than to forget."

"Oh! but the horror is so great!"

"What, of that near contact with evil?"

"I suppose it must be that."

"Art thou right there, my love?"

"That is what I want so much to know."

"Ah! my love, I would advise thee to think much and often of the dear Saviour while on earth—how he walked with sinners, dwelt with sinners, and how he loved them too. He was not deceived in them. He knew exactly what they were—how false, how selfish, and yet he loved them. Was he polluted by this contact? It may not be a similar case—indeed, I know it is not; but I think sometimes we are a little too much frightened by the idea of contact with sinners, when it is the sin that we should so much fear. I am not quite sure that we, as a Society, are not a little chargeable with this too great sensibility to the danger of receiving harm; forgetting that it is but half the Christian duty to keep ourselves unspotted from the world; while the other half is to visit the fatherless and the widow in their afflictions. And I have always understood by these, and other similar injunctions, as well as by the example of the dear Saviour himself, that we were to do good to our fellow beings, wherever, and in whatever way we

could. But, if the great mission of doing good, with which I believe we are all according to our measure charged, is not a consideration of sufficient weight, there is, I think, another view of this subject well calculated to silence the accuser, as well as to soften down that loathing and abhorrence with which, from hating sin, we are but too apt to regard the poor sinners themselves. The consideration to which I allude is this—'What am I myself?'"

"Oh! yes; I am fully aware of the force of this enquiry. But then there are some kinds of sin so dreadful to think of."

"True. There are some unquestionably which, to our limited conceptions, look very much more odious than others, and which we feel disposed to regard as really more culpable. Yet we do not find in Scripture that either *great* or *little* sins are spoken of, as such. Are we not rather taught that all sin, as it arises from the same source—alienation of the heart from God—is alike odious in the sight of Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. And I often think that, perhaps, when everything is taken into account, our selfishness, our wrong tempers, and even indolence, may be more odious in his sight, than

some of those crimes which make us shudder only to contemplate. I confess, however, that I have not myself derived much benefit from comparing and weighing matters of this kind in the scales of human wisdom. To repair continually to the fountain head, and while humbly and gratefully accepting the message of salvation, to dwell much upon the character, and the office of the blessed Saviour, and to listen in idea to his gracious promises to his disciples,—'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world', I believe to be the only sure and lasting preservation against those harrowing thoughts, and sad realities, which our imperfect nature is too weak to bear.

"And now, I am afraid I have said little to comfort or strengthen thee, dear child. Perhaps it may not be that any human voice, or even any human love, shall be able to do much for thee. But my spirit has mourned with thine, and will do so until I can feel that thou art more at peace.

"But see, our friends are coming with the carriage. Farewell, my love. These are dark days with thee, I fear. But try and keep thy mind from sinking. More peaceful times will come, even to thee. I believe—nay, I might almost say, I know it will be so."

Susannah still held the hand of her friend in hers, but spoke no more, except to utter one low and sad farewell; and then having gained the summit of the hill, the carriage drove away, and she was left alone.

Long and deeply did Susannah meditate upon the words of her friend, but chiefly upon the picture she had called up for her consideration of the pure and holy Jesus walking the troubled ways of earth in company with sinners; sitting down at the same board; looking upon them with tenderness and compassion; and finally suffering ignominy and death to save them. "Above all," she mentally repeated—"loving them." And how did this poor-tried spirit dwell upon this fact, the crowning one of all. At length, she asked herself whether in her own case, she had not, perhaps, been too harsh in conclusion—too severe in judgment? Who could account, she also asked, for the influence of a sordid example, and the want of right training in early youth? Or who could tell how difficult it might be, when once entangled in the snares of deception, to escape without deepening one false word or action by another? Who could tell how the poor heart might have struggled under the bondage of evil habits; or how

agonising might at times have been the struggle to get free.

In this manner Susannah went musing on, and deviated from the public road in order to prolong her solitary walk, until, by degrees, there overspread her heart again, a little of the old feeling of tenderness, mixed with a sense of pity, which it was an unspeakable consolation to experience; for nothing had distressed Susannah more than the hardness and bitterness which seemed to have taken possession of her soul.

As she pondered these thoughts in her mind, she sauntered slowly on, her head bent forward, and her eyes fixed steadfastly upon the ground; until, suddenly becoming conscious that a rapid step was following her, she started, and looked round.

"Hast thou found me, Oh, mine enemy!" might well have been Susannah's exclamation; for there stood the woman—the one only being in the whole world, on whom it was impossible just now for her to bestow a look of kindness. Nay; if the red flush which suddenly overspread her countenance, and the quickened step and haughty bearing, which instantly transformed her into apparently a different being, might be taken as an index to her

feelings, there was not only no kindness in her heart towards this woman, but something very much like loathing, and almost hate.

To meet this object in her path was, indeed, a terrible trial of those altered sentiments—those calm convictions which were to her so rich in peace and consolation to her trembling soul. Oh! why had this shadow crossed her path at the very moment when the long frozen stream of feeling was just beginning to burst its icy bonds, and to flow again with warm and genial current, ministering health and gladness to the tide of life?

Perhaps if Susannah's feelings had been analysed, it might have been discovered that some of a less serious nature mingled with the repulsion and abhorrence with which this unfortunate being was rejected. Her very countenance, so handsome in itself, but lax and bold in expression, would have been revolting to her under any circumstances; and her dress a little above that of the working class, yet more distinguished by gay colours than good taste, did not tend to make the general impression more agreeable. Besides which there was the memory of that laugh on the night when she was first seen, and when she threw back the imputation cast

upon her companion with scorn as well as defiance—all these, though comparatively trifles in themselves, and not assuming the form of any definite idea, had all so burnt their fiery way, along with deeper feelings, into the very centre of Susannah's heart, that she could not see so much as the outline of this woman's figure, without desiring to escape as from some venomous or devouring monster. And then that child—ugh!

Susannah shuddered as she became convinced that her steps were not only followed, but that she herself was the object of pursuit. An instinctive sense of personal dignity prevented her from so much as quickening her own pace beyond an ordinary walk, but the woman stretched on regardless enough of all dignity—all intrusion—of everything, in short, but the one purpose she was determined to accomplish; for there was something she must know, and of whom could she ask it now? Poor wretch! she was half distracted, and little dreamt of the sensation her approach was awakening within that shrouded heart which beat so near her own; and not only now, but which had so long been beating with an interest as intensely centred in the same object, viewing that object too through the same medium,

—the partial colouring of woman's love. Alike in this, although she knew it not, but separated wider than the poles by everything besides, though that also she did not know, the woman walked on, until, at last, making a more determined effort, she confronted her companion, compelling her to stop, and then she spoke.

The voice was not offensive, and her manner was so imploring, and so earnest, it might have softened any heart not previously steeled against her.

"I beg your pardon," she began, "but could you tell me where I might find Mr. Reuben Law?"

Susannah made no answer, but deviating a little from the path, again went on.

"Oh! do tell me, if you please," said the woman, now almost sobbing and walking on.

She was answered only by silence. Neither look nor movement indicated that her request was heard.

"But, perhaps," the woman went on to say, "you yourself could tell me just what I want to know. There is somebody who was going to leave the country. Do you think he is gone?"

Still there was no answer. The woman was

losing patience. She was not naturally gifted with much. "Oh! woman," she exclaimed, "I shall die if you don't tell me. Why you must know. He used often to come here. If you would only be so kind as to speak to me—one single word would do; only tell me whether he is gone or not. For the dear child's sake, do tell me that."

Susannah had now reached a stile which looked very formidable to her, because of the advantage it would afford her unwelcome companion; who, no doubt, made the same calculation upon this point of their intercourse, and keeping very close, said nothing more, until the moment when Susannah's face was unavoidably half-turned towards her; when she renewed her appeal, with still greater earnestness than before.

The stile being now between them, Susannah felt more courage; and laying her hand upon it for a moment as if to prevent the woman passing, she said hastily,—"Go away. I believe thee to be a bold, bad woman."

"Humph!" said the woman, all her fiery passions suddenly kindled, and sending the hot blood into her face—"I'm not going to be baffled and browbeaten in that way, I can tell you,

madam. Bold I am, and will be, until I find out where my husband is; and if I'm bad, there are other people not much better, meek as they can look sometimes."

While uttering these words, the woman had cleared the stile, and for a moment seemed determined to carry out her pursuit. Susannah heard the tone in which they were uttered more distinctly than the words themselves, and indeed, the ruffled state of her feelings scarcely left her at liberty to comprehend anything with clearness. By degrees, however, the woman fell behind, notwithstanding the defiance of her look and manner, and then Susannah began to breathe again—to breathe, and to think!

Alas! was this the lesson she had just been learning? Was this the manner in which that holy pattern, so recently held up before her as the object of her contemplation, met and answered the appeals of sinners while on earth? What was the value of the consolation she had just been permitted to enjoy? What, indeed, was the value of all the chastisings she had received, if such was the result?

Susannah had been afraid of her enemy. She now became afraid of herself—often the worst

enemy of all. And more than ever before disturbed and ruffled in her inmost feelings, she pursued her way, no longer meditating upon themes of heavenly hope or earthly comfort; but shocked, dispirited, and altogether driven off from that calm standing place on which she had kept her footing so long, even when the storm was raging and the billows heaved around her.

Unable at once to meet any of her family Susannah, immediately on reaching home, hastened up to her own room, glad to learn, as she passed, from one of the servants, that her cousin Dora had come to see Miss Lydia, and would remain to spend the day.

Habit does much for all of us, but seldom so much for any as for those who lead the kind of social and domestic life which is here described. Thus, before Susannah was called down, as she often was many times in the day, to attend to some household duty, she had so far recovered herself as to be able to appear without any visible sign of disturbance.

Indeed, it would be the strangest thing imaginable,—nay, worse than strange, as it would evidence insanity or else some fearful derilection of duty, if, under any calamity, there should

appear, amongst the Society of Friends, that derangement of dress and general disregard of appearance which is almost universally described as the necessary accompaniment of excited feeling. Thus we read of dishevelled hair, and a thousand other indications of the mind being so absorbed, or the passions so excited, as to leave no thought and no regard for mere external proprieties. But if these representations, so plentifully found in poetry and fiction, be true of human nature under other aspects, they certainly belong not even to the deepest emotions of that class of people of which we write. For amidst all which they feel, and do, and suffer, we doubt whether any event in life would surprise them into the neglect of a coat or a collar, or render them insensible to the derangement of a bonnet, or the escape of a lock of hair from its accustomed serenity.

It was thus that Susannah left her room, in all respects as neat as usual, from the topmost fluting of her muslin crown, to the sole of her softly-treading shoe. As no one observed any difference in her look or manner, so there was no subject for inquiry; and all that she had seen, heard, and suffered, on that eventful morning,—all the mingled feelings and the poignant agony, concen-

trated into the last few hours,—remained locked within her breast, without the betrayal of any outward sign or trace.

Other members of the family there were, who appeared both better and happier for the recent visit; as, indeed, Susannah might have been, but for the subsequent events of the morning. Rebecca Law was always greatly strengthened and comforted by these opportunities of spiritual refreshment; and though, like her husband, she was unable entirely to throw off the one burden of her thoughts, yet, as the Friend who accompanied Caroline Grey had spoken to her in private most encouragingly about her son, even venturing so far as to prophesy that he would yet become a pillar in the temple of holiness, she was able to appropriate a larger amount of comfort from these words than her husband seemed able to derive from any source just at the present time.

One thought was ever present with his tossed and troubled mind—*when* would his son return? The *how* seemed, even to his yearning heart, a matter of small consequence. What he wanted was to see him face to face,—to pour out his heart to him,—to own his mistake,—and to confess that he had been unjust. It is probable, that, in

thinking of his return, he never admitted any calculation about safety; or pictured him but in his natural health and vigour, clear in intellect, and sound of limb. It was not for his body that the father feared,—scarcely for the consequences of that most awful malady, of which he never yet had admitted the idea, beyond what he had seen and heard of in occasional moments of excess. He did not know how its insidious power had grasped the very being of his son, until his force of will was undermined, and his moral sense already darkened and confused.

Had Jacob Law known this, he would, probably, have made more determined efforts to find and rescue his son, wherever he might be. As it was, he only convinced himself that his own imagination had deceived him on the evening of the public meeting; and he did this by instituting such inquiries as would certainly have led to his discovery had he really been there. But no. It was clear that he was no longer in the neighbourhood. The clerk to whom the father constantly had recourse, would have been acquainted with the fact; and he it was who pursued the inquiries necessary for ascertaining whether the young man had been present at the meeting.

To the house of this clerk Jacob Law faithfully repaired every morning before breakfast, in the hope of finding that there had been some intelligence of his son. But all in vain. There was still no clue by which he might be traced; and whether to allay the parent's fears, or from his own honest convictions, the clerk dwelt much upon the fact of there being no letter as an encouraging circumstance; "Because," as he said, "if the young man was not filling a situation, and so maintaining himself, he would, most certainly, write for a supply of money."

The father shook his head at these suggestions. It might be so; but what he wanted was to have his son beneath the shelter of his own roof,—safe, reconciled, and re-united to his family again.

CHAPTER XII.

Of all the family at the Grange, Lydia, perhaps, evinced the greatest cheerfulness, as the result of that alteration in the state of her mind, which she attributed to the late visit, and, especially, to the address delivered at the public meeting in the evening.

Besides this, she was, happily, ignorant of much that had transpired during the last few weeks. Her brother, she was told, had gone to London; from whence she also expected his return, without apprehending anything at all distressing as the consequence; and although she knew so far as that Susannah had received some serious shock to her feelings in connexion with Paul Rutherford, yet, as she seemed to bear it so well, and to be so little changed by it, Lydia was not disposed to lay the matter much to heart.

She had never liked Paul,—never entirely believed in him; and now that he was gone, and the connection with her sister suspended—if not actually broken off, she hoped he would be long before coming back, and that Susannah would cease to care whether he came or not.

Still, it is scarcely likely that an affectionate girl like Lydia should have been so little alive to what was passing under her father's roof, even though carefully kept from hearing the most painful details, had she not been frequently absent with her cousin; and even when at home, had she not been so often absent in mind as to be lost in a dream,—a dream of so absorbing a nature, that her thoughts were seldom alive to the ordinary circumstances transpiring around her.

The dream had now faded, as such dreams will, sometimes in an almost incredibly short space of time. It had faded, and was gone as entirely as if its fanciful creations had never filled the chambers of her imagination. She could now converse with the utmost freedom, and even pleasure, on the subject of her cousin Dora's marriage, and especially since the meetings she felt more at her ease than ever in discussing the various subjects

connected with this great event, as well as expatiating upon that pleasant future, which Dora so confidently anticipated.

As already stated, Dora had gone over to the Grange, ostensibly to spend the day there, but really to beg of Lydia to go back with her, and stay through the remainder of the week. Then Carl would come, and she should wish for no one else.

Lydia cheerfully complied, and promised if she could to obtain the consent of her parents; for up to an age considerably beyond Lydia's, the obedience of children, even in comparatively trifling matters, was rigidly enforced in the families of the Friends; so that the most unimportant or familiar visit was seldom paid without parental leave being solicited.

Notwithstanding her cordial response to much that her cousin had to say, Lydia's thoughts were full of the meetings of the previous day, and of what she herself had felt and experienced in connection with them. "Oh! Dora," she said, laying down her work, "I am so glad that I am a Friend!"

"Why, yes," said Dora, not quite so agreeably excited by the subject, "I do think they are the nicest people in the world."

"And art thou not sorry to leave them, then?"

"I should be if I did not think it was still nicer to be Carl's wife."

"I hope thou wilt not have to regret it, dear."

"That I never shall. I have no fear whatever—not the slightest bit."

"Oh, Dora!"

"Why should I?"

"Because it is such a serious thing to be married; and especially to a person brought up so differently from ourselves."

"But human hearts are the same, whatever their habits may be; and love is the same in whatever language it is spoken. And as regards simplicity, about which Friends talk so much, I am sure Carl is far more simple than any of our kind of men. Cousin William, for instance. Good at heart, and wise, and excellent in every way, I never feel quite to understand him. By-the-bye, Liddy, I believe Cousin William is coming home."

"Soon?"

"Yes, I should not be surprised if he had already arrived in London. I shall be so glad to have the dear grave old fellow here again. Wont thee be glad, Liddy?"

"Oh! of course, I shall."

"Of course? That sounds dismally cold."

"Not colder I think than his manner of going away—never telling any of us, nor coming to take leave."

"It seems to me, Liddy, that you two were both rather cold, and queer, before he went. It was the greatest puzzle to me imaginable. I sometimes fancied poor Carl was at the bottom of it, and that William did not like thy intimacy with him. Only think of that wise head of his conceiving so absurd a notion as thy falling in love with Carl! Nay, Liddy, don't blush so. I am not saying that William actually *was* jealous—only rather odd and incomprehensible. It might be as I have heard some people hint, that he was afraid of being taken captive himself by the charms of that bonny Margaret. I declare I think I should, if I was a man."

"I think, Dora, thy head seems to be pretty well filled with such matters just now."

"And thine, my dear?"

"I can most conscientiously say it has been very differently occupied."

"For how long?"

"Do be serious, Dora."

"Well, now, I am serious. But, Oh, Liddy! Carl will be here again in just a week from this

time? How shall I meet him, I wonder. It will be so strange—all things seem strange just now. There is one thing, however, that *does* make me very grave."

"I wonder what?"

"My poor dear mama. Think only, we have never been separated for a single week; for even when I was at school, she came and took a house close by; and she has only me."

"I almost wonder thou canst leave her."

"I often wonder at myself, and how it all came about. Liddy, did thee suppose that Carl was loving me all the while?"

"I don't think I am quick in making such discoveries."

"Why, to judge by appearances, one would almost have thought the fair Lydia was the object of his choice."

"Nonsense, Dora. Don't talk to me in that foolish way. Be satisfied with Carl thyself, and make him as good a wife as he deserves."

"Ah! no fear of that."

"Is it so easy, then?"

"Ask me that question ten years hence, and I shall be better able to tell thee."

Dora thought her cousin most provokingly

grave and discouraging on this occasion; but she was not one to trouble herself much about people's moods of temper or feeling; so she managed to console herself in her usual way, with extorting amusement from the simplest events of the passing moment, which, for her, was sure to be something pleasant to see, hear, or experience.

No objection being made to the projected visit, Lydia went home with her cousin that evening, thus leaving one cheerful face the less around her father's table.

The following day, at the widow Greenfell's, was one of brilliant exhibition. Dora had been with her mother a few days before to make purchases at the county town; and wonderful indeed to Lydia's unaccustomed gaze, was the variety, as well as the richness, elegance, and beauty, of the articles selected.

On expressing a little surprise that the preparations should be so far advanced, she was told by her cousin, in the most confidential manner, that the marriage would be very soon. It was, she said, impossible for Carl to wait, on account of important matters connected with his father's mercantile affairs.

"I think I should *make* him wait," observed Lydia, very sagely.

"But," said Dora, "I have my own reasons too, or I very likely should. I want to get through without any fuss, and especially without the visiting and lecturing which I know the Friends would give me if I should allow them time. So thee see, I have not been so decided in opposing Carl's wishes as otherwise I might have been."

The only disagreeable part of this interesting affair to Dora, was the exercise of that discipline to which she knew she must be subjected on leaving the Society of which she had inherited her membership by birth. If she waited now, to let things take their course, her case would have to be officially reported in the meeting to which she belonged, as it would at all events. But if sufficient time was given, an appointment of one or two Friends would be made to visit, and deal with her, as a delinquent; and her persistence in the course she had taken, would have to be publicly reported to the same meeting. All these transactions would necessarily be of a public nature, and the case would be entered on record in books appropriated to the separate minutes made

on the recurrence of such meetings, and thus containing a distinct and authentic history of that section of the Society's proceedings from year to year.

Now nothing could well be less congenial to little Dora's feelings than a grave and official visitation of this kind, conducted even, as she knew such visitations almost always were, with much gentleness and love, and in short with more of sorrow than of anger. Light and flippant as Dora often was, she had a trick of shedding tears as soon as she found herself involved in anything like reprimand or rebuke; and, seeing that she could not give up her lover, she said it would seem so obstinate, and so ungracious to the Friends, to persist in doing what they strongly advised her against.

One other alternative remained available. Dora might, of her own free will, resign her membership; in which case, however, there would still be appointments and visitings, and a great deal that sounded very formidable. So that, altogether, she had come to the conclusion that it would be better to slip quite out of the way as privately, and as soon as possible, especially as this appeared to be exactly what was most agreeable to Carl.

Besides these weighty reasons, there was one perhaps more weighty still, in making Dora wish that her marriage should be very private. As it must necessarily be conducted according to the ritual of the established church, and consequently not in accordance with "Friend's principles," it would be impossible for any member of that body *consistently* to accompany her to church, or to support her in any way through the ceremony. Beautifully as she intended to be dressed, and highly as she would have appreciated the imposing effect of a perfectly appointed assemblage of relatives and friends, it would look, Dora said, but a dismal affair, to go into church as a bride without father or mother, uncle or cousin, by her side. And such was the trial to one so social and so liberal in her affections as Dora, that she sometimes shed a tear or two while complaining of the hardship and the cruelty, as if the fate she deplored had not been entirely of her own choosing.

The startling announcement to Lydia that the marriage was to be very soon, had the effect of suddenly arresting the busy fingers previously employed in folding and unfolding, placing in the best light, and a variety of other agreeable occupations, all now suspended; while the two young

ladies sat in deep thought, almost buried amongst drawn out lengths of silk, and satins, shawls, and muslins. Dora, with her dark hair and eyes, looking not unlike an Eastern beauty, as we see them sometimes pictured half enveloped in curtains, cushions, and loose drapery; only that the quick bright sparkle of her brilliant eyes, and her light and rapid movements, would ever form a striking contrast to the passive indolence of those luxurious climes.

Suddenly, as the two friends were thus engaged, a loud knock was heard at the outer door.

"There!" exclaimed Dora, springing to her feet in a moment, "that is cousin William. I thought he would come."

Lydia was busy in the same instant smoothing her hair before the glass, for bonnets as well as shawls had been both examined and fitted on.

Dora had flown to meet her cousin, and was soon upon the stairs again calling to Lydia to come down for the same purpose, for it was not usual with this young lady to remember, with perfect distinctness, how far other people were likely to share in her own feelings, or were not. Lydia came down, however, without manifesting any reluctance; and if she did not rush with the same

expressions of delight to meet the traveller, he, for his part, looked at that moment as if he thought the welcome which awaited him quite rich enough in value to have been the reward of a pilgrimage very different from his.

Never before, in his whole life perhaps, had William Greenfell appeared to such advantage. That which he had most wanted was to rub off something of his stiff English character—to stretch out his mind—to extend his observations—and, in short, to lighten and enliven his whole nature. The materials of which it was composed were excellent, but something in the structure and composition seemed to demand more light, more breadth, more vividness; and nothing seemed more likely to supply what was wanted, than travelling through foreign couutries in agreeable and enlivening company.

Born in a small country town, of whieh his father was the wealthiest and most influential inhabitant, and being the only child of proud and partial parents, William had begun life under great disadvantages with regard to general expansion and discipline of mind. His father, a wealthy man, was deeply emersed in business of various kinds, including a bank, and some other occupa-

tions of less dignity in the opinion of his neighbours, though scarcely requiring less attention, or less skill in their management. Early in life, too, Willlam was left, by the death of both parents, to make his own way in the world; and perhaps it was from this cause, as well as in part from his own natural disposition, that he afterwards evinced a decision in forming his own resolutions, and a promptness in carrying them out, far exceeding what is generally displayed by persons of his age and circumstances.

Without either brothers or sisters, and thus deprived of all domestic companionship, yet with a heart naturally full of kindness, William Greenfell was more than usually thrown upon more distant relationships for that cordial interchange of feeling without which his life, however prosperous, and congenial in its business avocations, would scarcely have been endurable. Thus then it was, that there had grown up between him and his cousin Dora an intimacy like that of a brother and sister. Each felt the need of the other, although they had perhaps no single thought or feeling in common; and while William was by no means insensible to the affectionate caresses of his lovely cousin, he was even better pleased to

feel that he could often render essential services both to her and her widowed mother.

Perhaps these services were the more needed, and the more frequently required, because, as already stated, the habits of the widow and her daughter were a little less in accordance with those of the stricter order of Friends than was quite approved at the Grange; so that while the widow herself could freely consult with her brother on all business matters, and was glad to enjoy the support, which his excellent judgment afforded, there were many cases in which she could not ask his advice, because they were those in which it would be vain to expect his concurrence.

William, though a staunch Friend in principle, was willing to go a little further in external matters than Jacob Law, and more particularly than Rebecca. Hitherto, however, his own views had been by no means expansive. Not that he cared much about any mere externals—perhaps not so much as to render it in the least degree difficult for him to conform in almost every respect to the customs of the Society to which he belonged. Thus his daily walk, like his character, was decided, correct, and somewhat uniform. He

had no eccentricities, and perhaps felt but little charity for those who had, being more lenient to vice itself than to folly; because, as he said, the temptation in one case was so much greater than in the other.

With all these excellent qualities, it may easily be supposed that William Greenfell wanted just one thing, and it was one of incalculable importance in the eyes of young ladies, especially. He was not what is called *interesting*. No man can be all things at once. It is just possible he did not really care about being interesting generally, and scarcely would have thought it worth his while had he known how to be so.

But had there not come a time, as there does to all men, sooner or later, when he began to feel the want of something that might serve him as a sort of recommendation in certain quarters, or win for him a larger measure of favour in some bright eyes? The probability is that some feelings of this kind mingled, though perhaps unconsciously, with that sudden and ardent desire to travel which had at first transported him across the channel, and then led him on from one point of interest to another, with a rapidity which suited well with his accustomed habits of prompt-

ness and decision. It is true he had happened to fall into company with a friend who was on the point of setting out for a hurried tour along the Rhine, and through Switzerland; and this was the reason he assigned, when questioned by his cousin Dora in her impertinent way, as to why he had gone, and gone so suddenly.

But whatever the cause might be, or the combined causes, William Greenfell had done a wise and politic thing for his own interests. He had seen all the celebrated points of observation in that line of travel. He had gazed from many a mountain height, he had trod the perilous glacier with unswerving feet, he had sailed upon the lake of Geneva, and penetrated the dungeons of Chillon; and now he had returned to tell, in animated language, of the incidents, and even dangers of his journey. Beyond this, he had brought home a portfolio well stored with pictures of the scenes he had visited. What more could any fastidious young lady desire?

Nor was it then, as now. A tour on the continent was at that time an era in a person's history, even if the journey extended no further than France, Germany, or Switzerland. The accustomed route was not then hackneyed even to

the point of weariness. People could then sit and talk amongst their friends of having visited Paris, or St. Bernard, as they now talk of Constantinople, or even Shanghae. The loveliness or grandeur of continental scenery might then be expatiated upon without driving company away. Como was then sparkling as a gem. Vevay a nest of beauty. The old castles of the Rhine were then hung with garlands of romance—the valleys laughed with their golden harvests, and the vine clad hills were eloquent of Bacchus and the Muses.

To families situated like those we have described, this was especially the case; and when William Greenfell became animated in his descriptions of sun-rise in the Alps, the perils of the mountain passes, or the sublimity of thunder pealing amid the rocks and caverns, and masses of cloud rolling far beneath the traveller's feet, Lydia and her cousin listened with an intensity of interest which could scarcely have been surpassed, had the narrator told of feats of arms, or described his own participation in any other acts of heroism.

But chiefly to Lydia was the story of these travels, the description of these scenes, intensely interesting. With her natural taste for music and

poetry, it would have been strange had she not been almost equally sensible to the sister art of painting; and through whatever medium the idea of beauty is presented to such a mind, that is painting; and impressions thus made by words, are sometimes even deeper and more durable than that of form and colour.

But the crowning charm of all was in these pictures, some of sublimity, and some of loveliness—all new to Lydia, and glowing in the tints of a climate to which she was equally a stranger. Thus was her imagination excited in no common manner, and she looked and listened with the flattering attention which no man perhaps has ever yet been able to resist, from Othello down to William Greenfell.

So the traveller lingered through the day, and then came again with a fresh supply of pictures; and thus the remainder of the week glided on, with now and then a quiet, rambling walk; and, as Dora often complained, with very little work being done. She had asked her cousin Lydia to help her, and she had calculated upon busy fingers being every day at work; but here were three days gone, and nearly four, and scarcely a piece of work begun!

On the evening of the fourth day, there was more real business transacted than on the previous three, and business of a much more serious nature too, as the reader shall see.

CHAPTER XIII.

The week which had flown so rapidly at the Widow Greenfell's, touching every object with a roseate hue, and giving to every sound a silver tone, had passed with leaden wings over a habitation not very distant, leaving its shadow upon anxious brows, and darkening the silent walk of weary feet.

But while everything around and about him had lost its familiar charm to Robert Moreton, and while the days seemed endless in duration, there was not wanting to his inner life, a joyful upspringing of something so like hope, that the fluttering of his heart had every now and then to be thrust down as it were by some violent pressure, in order to keep it moderately still. Hope, did we say—of what? This was a question which the dreamer attempted not to answer to himself; and yet it *was* hope, because it rushed ever on, and ever pointed

onward, and upward, to some glorious issue—distant, it might be, but almost sure.

And everything with him resolved itself now into some wave or current swelling onward in the same course. All conversation had some burden which gave weight to this onward pressure; all facts tended the same way; all thoughts were ministers to the same end. It was not love—not common human love. Oh! no; for love is selfish—personal—individual; but this great tide of feeling encircled the whole world, embracing all mankind. Yes. Light was already in the horizon—gladding the valleys, dancing on the hills. The day was coming, a day of high and glorious enterprise—a day of mental and spiritual emancipation.

And he who saw these visions, and felt these stirrings of the hidden life, could it be possible that he was dreaming, or was he only now awake? Ah! that is the great question with others, besides him—whether these great conceptions, these burning thoughts, these aspirations after the unseen but not the less believed in—whether these are not in reality *the* life; and man's daily occupations with his ledger or his loom—whether these are not the dreams?

However this may be, there are few persons

capable of high aspirations, aud deep feelings, yet leading a life of pent-up energies—held down and encrusted as it were, beneath the small conventionalities of some narrow and secluded sphere—there are few persons thus gifted by nature, and thus hemmed in by circumstances, who have not experienced at times a thirsting, so intense, to drink of deeper streams, and to soar in higher air, as almost to nerve them to some act of desperation; only that such act would appear almost as desperate to those around them if it had the highest good for its object, as the lowest vice.

But, as always is the case with minds thus influenced, there is some cause arising out of things immediate, and around—some error to be rectified—some evil to be removed—some wrong to be set right; and hence the disproportionate amount of such enthusiasm expended upon pulling down, instead of building up.

In the present instance it was the old grievance arising out of the narrow views of the Society of Friends, their obstinate adherence to rule and precedent, their disregard of adaptation to the necessities of human life, their dread of change and innovation, and their consequent deadness and stagnation, as a body.

But if these were the considerations out of which arose the immediate impulse to do something, or to be something, which might tend to break their leaden bondage, and so to wake the dormant energies of those who slept their long captivity away; on the other hand there was the most entire appreciation of the moral purity —the moral grandeur, it might almost be said, of the framework and foundation of the Society, as a nobly constructed whole.

Without this, the enterprise would indeed be vain, the struggle for emancipation worse than idle. To a young and ardent mind there was something so nearly approaching the sublime in that belief to which he still held in the immediate inspiration of the few, in the infallible teachings of the Spirit to the whole, and in the simple obedience of the many—in their conferring, not with flesh and blood, but going forth clad only in spiritual armour, to do the work appointed them, making no calculations upon means or ends, but simply, and with singleness of heart, doing only what they were called to do, going only where they were sent, and speaking only the words given them to speak—There was in all this, to one constituted as Robert Moreton,

a power and a reality surpassing what had ever been evidenced of any other Christian community since the first apostles commenced their ministry on earth.

It was because of this reality, so strongly appreciated and believed in, that Robert conceived the notion of rebuilding the noble fabric, or rather remodelling this framework of social excellence, so as to render it better adapted, not only to the wants of human nature, but also to the onward progress of society as it was then advancing. And in taking his stand upon what he considered the fundamental principles of Friends, he never forgot the scrupulous adherence of those who ministered in their religious meetings to that important rule by which they were kept clear of all liability to sordid or pecuniary temptation in connection with the exercise of this peculiar gift. With them, unquestionably, the servant was worthy of his hire, in as much as, like other members of the body, he was kept from want and degradation; but he must also walk before his fellow-men, as well as stand before his God, clear both in act and thought, of all pollution from the mixing of mercenary motives with obedience to his spiritual call.

Long, and earnestly, had Robert Moreton dwelt upon these subjects in the secret of his hidden mind. There were few to whom he could have made them the theme of conversation; for when he did do so formerly with companions of his own age and standing, he soon discovered with dismay and disappointment, that their views were not like his, nor their motives either. They wanted liberty, it is true, but it was the liberty of doing wrong—he wanted the liberty of doing greater, and higher good. How wide the difference! Yet who was there in the whole range of the Society who could have seen the difference, or appreciated its value, after having first observed that he had thrown off the external badge of conformity?

Under this difficulty, and because he could not make himself believed in, but rather felt most painfully, that he was accounted by the Friends as one of those who sought the licence of an immoral life, Robert began to think very seriously whether he had not better commence his career of projected usefulness by those little acts of conformity of dress and manners, which, while of no consequence to him, would procure acceptance for what he might have to say and do, in relation

to subjects of infinitely higher importance, both to him and to the world at large.

How much of human sympathy or human help, in the great work before him, the enthusiast had been calculating upon, perhaps none ever knew; or whether he stood alone in that pictured future where he already saw himself an humble instrument employed for raising this beloved Society up to the high standard of which it must be worthy, or without which it must inevitably sink and die away. Perhaps he did not, even in the most secret chambers of his imagination, behold a young devoted maiden standing by his side, still less a wife—a matron sharing his toils, exulting in the success of his efforts, or deploring their defeat. In fact, he knew not what he saw, nor hardly, even felt. All was enveloped in a silvery mist, with only here and there a point of beauty, tinged with gold or purple, like the morning hues along the mountain side, ere yet the sun has risen or the vapours rolled away.

One thing he did know—a clear and definite fact it was to him—the day was fixed for Lydia's return; and then he could renew the conversation of that night, which seemed to have set the vital spark to his enthusiasm.

Yes, and the day at last arrived, and Lydia came home again, so lovely and so cheerful, that Robert never asked himself if she was quite the same. Indeed there is every probability that she was the same to him, and he to her. What difference could there be? Only she was glad to talk of Friends, and how she loved them, and wished they would be true to their own principles; and how she thought too, that if young people were more serious, more in earnest, and tried their very utmost, the society might yet be raised again to its original purity and excellence.

These were hopeful words to Robert, and it so happened that he and Lydia were very much alone just then, for on the day following that of her return, her father and mother went off early to a meeting, from whence they were not expected to return until late in the evening, so that the two sisters and Robert were left to pass the day together.

And Lydia was so kind now. Robert thought she had never been so kind to him before. Perhaps this little absence had made her value him more, and like him better. However this might be, he found himself more in the house that day

than was his practice, or perhaps his duty. But his heart was so full of great thoughts, what could he do with them, unless he laid them at the feet of one who could understand their meaning, and appreciate their worth?

Thus gently did the hours glide on, until as the two friends sat together in the afternoon, half reading, half talking, and, perhaps, feeling more than either, Susannah rather suddenly opened the door of the parlour, and said "Lydia, I am called away to a sick person in the village. Don't wait tea for me. I may be back in time, but I scarcely think I shall."

Had not the two dreamers been very far gone, each in their own individual dreams, they would have perceived a peculiarity in Susannah's voice, which she, of all people would not have betrayed had there not been some unusually exciting cause. But they expressed no surprise, and made no remark, only Robert offered his services to attend Susannah home, which she rather hastily declined, and left the room, her sister attaching but little importance to the errand upon which she was going, because it was so often the case, that their sick or suffering neighbours sent for Susannah in their seasons of distress.

Indeed she was, like many women of the Society of Friends, at the time of which we write, a kind of village doctress in her simple way; and if she could not always cure the diseases of the body, she was sure to soothe the mind, and to leave the house she entered more comfortable than she found it; so that many sent for her who cared but little for her medicines, and seldom did they send in vain. It was her practice in paying these visits, always to read a chapter in the Bible before leaving, either to the patient alone, or to the assembled family; and such was the sweetness of her voice, and her clear and solemn manner, that her patients sometimes said, "a single chapter read by her did them more good than many sermons."

But instead of accompanying Susannah in her walk, we must return to the parlour we just left, where Lydia sits so peacefully, no longer with head turned to the window, and her eyes gazing out into the gathering darkness, but like the true presiding genius of the home circle—social, genial, and contented. In this manner she performed the little duties of the evening, presiding at the tea table with such unconscious cheerfulness, that her companion might well have been

forgiven had he wished to sit and sip such draughts as those for the remainder of his life.

Surely there must have been something rather absorbing in Lydia'a own thoughts that evening, or she would have seen in her companion's countenance a change—a change which to himself was even startling, as he felt the warm blood rush up to his forehead, while his heart beat as he fancied audibly. What had came over him? His eyes grew bright, and wild. Was that sweet evening to be the one great crisis of his life?

But Lydia saw nothing, knew nothing, only that the tea equipage was being removed; and then the curtains were let down, and then she rose to stir the fire. "The evening," she said, "begins to feel a little chill and frosty, just sufficiently so, to make the fire agreeable."

Robert stood leaning with one arm on the mantelpiece. Lydia was very near him; but somehow or other she never knew when she was near to Robert Moreton, nor when his eyes were fixed upon her face, large as they were, and very beautiful.

It seemed a very natural impulse for a young man thus situated, to lay his hand upon the fair arm that was so near him; and Robert did so

without being repulsed. They had been talking very earnestly. They had been saying, each to the other, in a kind of childlike confidence, that they would put on some outward badge of their profession. Robert would change his coat, and Lydia would begin to wear a cap, and to keep each other in countenance, they would do this on the same day, and nobody need know their reasons for doing so, but themselves. It waswonderful how this little confidential arrangement cleared the way for what Robert had to say.

As already stated, his hand was upon Lydia's arm, and his deep eyes were gazing full into her face. She raised hers too, returning the full clear glance, but she saw nothing, understood nothing, even then.

At last he spoke—spoke out of his full heart—spoke with that fervour and pathos, which a nature like his alone is capable of feeling; yet, with such delicacy and tenderness, that his words would scarcely have startled a slumbering dove.

And now he told of the long past—of daily strife with his own feelings—of living on from year to year upon the meagre aliment of words, and looks, and thoughts, which had no reference to him; and of that deep passion which had so eaten into the

very centre of his being, that he found in man no fellowship—in woman no delight.

Lydia, all the while, did not withdraw her arm, nor thrust back the hand which held it, but her eyes gradually fell. There was no blush upon her cheek, nor other evidence of feeling, only a gentle tremor all through her frame. What could this quietness portend?

Hope? yes; or the first words would surely have startled her. She would have shrunk away from him, repelled. She would have scorned him—shunned him. But now she stood beside him calm as a statue. Why then so sad? for now he saw her eyelids quivering with the weight of "unshed tears." But still she stood so near him, that her very breathing seemed to fan his cheek.

Poor dreamer! He did not know there was a distance wider than repulsion—a barrier more impassable than hate—the long companionship of undisturbed indifference.—Was it even so?

Lydia looked up again, and now her eyes were filled with tears, and never did she look so lovely as when her countenance was marked by deep and tender feeling. Her lip first quivered slightly, then she tried to speak, and then a tear rolled

down her cheek and dropped upon that helpless hand which had no power to keep the arm it grasped so.

Something must be said. Tears would not do: they were even worse than nothing, so Lydia tried again, beginning rather ominously by saying—"I am sorry—very sorry. I had no idea—not the least." And so on, without any definite conclusion of any kind, so Robert of course began to hope again.

It was necessary now to rouse herself. She did so at last, and said distinctly, "No, it can never be.

"Why?"

"Oh! for many reasons."

"Tell me all."

"No, that would be needless pain to us both. One reason is sufficient."

"Tell me that one, then,"

"I cannot."

"Lydia, I must know it. Art thou engaged?"

"I believe I am."

The fair arm was suddenly dropped as if it had been a weight of stone.

Lydia looked up again so sweetly, and spoke so kindly, calling Robert her brother, and her

friend; and saying how much she should always prize his friendship—his advice—his sympathy.

"Pshaw!" He exclaimed. And now, for the first time since she had known him, Lydia saw how capable of passion was the silent hidden being with whom she had so long associated without really knowing him.

There was something almost terrible in the wild outbreak which followed. But Lydia was not frightened, only grieved; and thus she strove to administer consolation, while adding fuel to the fire.

Of course, there was everything said, which men can say on such occasions, and even more than most find eloquence to say; and Lydia, as women will do, lamented over her sad fate, that she seemed born to make everybody miserable whom she fain would make happy; with a great deal more of a sentimental and melancholy kind; while looking all the while in her own person the very personification of social comfort and domestic blessing.

Thus then, with her the matter ended; and she retired with placid sweetness, only a shade more sad than usual,—that was all.

But to him who stood alone in the old parlour gazing on vacancy, what was there left? Nothing, absolutely nothing. No high ambition—no glorious enterprise—no end worth gaining—no object worth pursuit—no work for the labourer to do—no no battle for the warrior to fight. The armour he had been girding on fell from him. Even victory would now be less welcome than defeat, He felt no fear of suffering. To that he was inured. But, oh! the long duration—the interminable nothingness of life!

CHAPTER XIV.

We must now turn our attention to the object of Susannah's visit to the village of Heath, and observe how rapidly she is pursuing her way along the valley where the Grange is situated, and up the hill without stopping to gain breath, or once turning her head so much as to look on either side. It was not her habit to walk in this manner, but rather with deliberate though certain step. But now she absolutely hurried on in a way so little like herself, that the work people whom she passed, stopped to look after her with considerable astonishment.

At length she gains the level upon which the village stands, and without a moment's hesitation, or enquiry, makes directly for the little Inn, already described. A woman is evidently waiting for her at the door. Susannah enters, and a strange unseemly place it looks for her, though

tolerably decent and reputable in its way. The London coaches change horses here, and there is generally a good deal of bustle and noise about the entrance. But the woman speaks low, and earnestly, shaking her head as if there was some trouble in the house—something more serious within, than the loose laughter, and coarse jokes of those who throng the door without.

"I don't know," she said, in rather a hesitating manner, and placing herself directly in the way,—"I don't know whether I have done right—whether it would be safe—I hope you will excuse me, but——"

"Let me go up stairs directly;" said Susannah.

The woman yielded at once, for there was something in that voice, and look, the authority of which it would have been useless to dispute.

Nor was there any need to lead the way, for noisy as the place was altogether, there was one sound which to Susannah's ear was louder than all else, and seemed to fill the place. It was a hoarse rapid voice that never ceased for a single moment, but went rambling on, sometimes in sharp and sometimes in husky tones, but always with a certain touch of horror in the sound, as if there was a dread of something monstrous coming very near.

Directed by this sound to the chamber where the patient lay, Susannah pursued her way until she reached the very door. Here for an instant she paused. Her courage failed her, and well it might; for now a name was mingled with those rambling words—a name which, amidst all horrors, was the most terrible for her to hear.

The woman of the house, who had followed, now attempted to pull her back a little way, while whispering—"Ah! that's the name he keeps continually calling out, ever since I had that woman here to help."

"What woman?" asked Susannah.

"Why you see, I was full handed, myself, and there was night work, as well as day, so I got a decent looking woman that has been up here wanting nurse work, to sit up with him."

"Where is she now?"

"Gone home to get a little rest."

"Where is her home?"

"She lodges for the present with the Thompsons just down the hill there. They tell me she is in trouble, and has seen better days; but I don't think much about that, myself; for she went about the work as if she'd been used to it. I should have fancied, from the way the poor young gen-

tleman went on, that he had known her before, only that he's so wild, and rambles so, poor dear, there's no coming at the truth."

"Was he disturbed by seeing her?"

"I don't know that exactly. He was bad enough before. But he got hold of that name directly she came in. Hark! He's at it again. I guess that Paul, he talks about, has been a shocking bad fellow; only one can't take for gospel all he says just now, poor dear.

"Is the woman likely to come here again?"

"That depends upon whether he stays, or not. I'm sure we would do the best we could for him here. But a house of business, and situated as we are, you know, Miss Law, and with our customers, I think you will see——"

"Oh! yes. I know all about that."

"Why it was but this very morning, that young gentleman—that foreigner that was at Mrs. Greenfell's—he came by the coach, and got out here, and asked for a room to wash his hands; and he heard the noises, and began quite fierce to say he would be into that room, for he heard of somebody he must find, and a great deal more; for he spoke so that nobody could understand him sometimes, and my belief is he did not understand

himself. However, there was a terrible do amongst them altogether, for my husband said he should'nt go into the room, and we were forced to tell him who it was, in order to pacify him, and get him away."

Susannah was all the while endeavouring to gather strength to go into the room; and she would have effected her purpose much sooner had not the woman unconsciously added so much force to her difficulty, already rendered almost insurmountable by the hearing of that name.

At last, feeling that she *must* go, she called up all her powers of resolution, and walked straight into the room, and up to the bed where a man was tossing—flushed with fever—restless—mad, as it seemed to her.

There is a species of madness, of which, at the time of Susannah knew nothing, and she stood by the bed in a state of extreme horror, gazing upon the distorted, but well known features of her brother.

Two nights before this, he had reached, or rather he had been brought to the inn in a condition not to be described. The people received him as they had often done before, not aware that there was now approaching illness added to his

well-known weakness and depravity. Soon, however, the true state of the case became apparent. A doctor was sent for, who recommended quietness, saying that the violence would pass off in a few days. Circumstances, however, had occurred to excite the already disordered brain, and thus the disease had rapidly increased to a delirium which threatened an attack of brain fever.

The question was, and this was what Susannah pondered so earnestly, whether the patient could be removed. In order to see her way through this difficulty, she wanted to think—to collect herself, and then to act as best she might.

All the while that she was doing this, the woman continued her history of what had passed during the last few days and nights, never supposing, since the patient could not utter a sensible, or collected sentence, that he might be subject to accessions of excitement, owing to what she said and did; and never dreaming either, that, wrapped, as Susannah seemed to be, in earnest thought, every word she uttered went piercing through her nerves, until she feared that she was growing almost as distracted as the miserable object before her. For the woman,

like most persons in her situation, went on describing details of the most harrowing nature, without being at all sensible of the effect her words produced. Even the clothes in which Reuben had returned, were exhibited, and all the while Susannah stood like one stupified, without being able to command sufficient power to compel the woman to be still.

Even to herself it would have been utterly unaccountable, had she been able collectedly to think, how such a change could have been produced in so short a space of time. She little knew the reckless infatuation—the degradation—the total disregard of everything but momentary indulgence to which her brother's fatal malady can reduce its victims; and that, in a space of time incredible to those who never have been near enough to make personal observations upon its loathsome and repulsive features.

In the case of Reuben Law, there were many circumstances concurring to the same end. He had set off to London in a fever of impatience to be gone, thinking only of what he should leave behind, and not of what he should be likely to find at the termination of his journey. In London, of all places, he was least at home—least

likely to find friends without direct application to such as might be known to his father, and they were not the most likely to suit his purposes just then. In London too, he was beset with innumerable temptations, upon which he had never calculated — temptations to spend money, even when it was not in anything absolutely wrong. Thus his small means were rapidly expended. He felt ashamed to write for more so soon, and especially when he had no prospect to hold out, and no statement to make of an encouraging or hopeful nature. Anxiety regarding his actual position, from day to day, increased his desire for that opiate which he knew would help him over the troubles of the passing moment. And thus from one entanglement to another, from one downward step to a step still lower, he went on, until the wonder was that he should be able to reach his native place at last. This, in all probability, he never would have done, but for the help of a person on the road, who had not only given him a night's lodging, but a few shillings to enable him to proceed on his way.

Beyond his arrival at the village of Heath, nothing of course was known by the people. The rest was only surmised; and thus it was, in part,

that the woman might suppose she was discharging a duty by bringing forward all the evidence she could collect to assist the family in ascertaining the truth.

It was a truth, respecting which, Susannah was not solicitous at the present moment. Already there was truth enough before her eyes—resounding in her ears. Yet, still she pondered, and was deeply engaged in a plan which she thought looked promising, when suddenly, she was startled by the sound of a well known voice beneath the window of the room. She had heard the wheels of a carriage which stopped at the door; and now her father was calling loudly to the landlord of the inn to bring out a parcel which somebody was to leave there directed for the Grange, and which he wished to carry onward in his chaise, for he and his wife were now returning home after their day of peaceful and quiet duty.

Susannah had rushed to the top of the stairs, and seeing the woman below, beckoned to her to come up.

"On no account," said she, "let a hint of this matter escape."

The woman assured her she would not, nor her husband either. But while the chaise was wait-

ing, the poor mad creature within the room began to talk, as it seemed, to Susannah, in a louder tone than before, until she thought it impossible but that her parents must recognize the voice.

"You seem to have some very noisy customers here," said Jacob Law, adjusting the parcel at his feet." "I do wish, James, thou wouldst keep a more orderly house."

"Why, you see, sir," the landlord began; but Jacob had resumed the reins, and in another moment the carriage moved on.

Susannah breathed again. Her father must soon know the worst—that was inevitable. But suddenly to have come into that room, without previous warning—oh! it was not to be thought of! And while the peril had been impending, her heart had almost ceased to beat.

She now told the woman of the house that she must see the doctor, but first felt it necessary to hasten home; so that if she would engage the doctor to meet her in the course of an hour, she would be sure to return by that time.

With this charge, Susannah was leaving the house, when, suddenly recollecting herself, she stepped hastily back to say, "I should not wish any one to be engaged as nurse to-night.

Please to leave all such arrangements entirely to me."

The evening was now quite dark, but Susannah had no fear. There are states of mind which preclude the possibility of fear. And thus she hurried on, taking the nearest way across the fields, though that was the least frequented. Nothing, however, harmed her; thus she reached her father's door, before the bustle attendant upon the late arrival had subsided. She was able even to take her accustomed post in waiting upon her mother, and readjusting whatever had been displaced.

Robert Moreton was the person whom Susannah most wanted—always a brother and a friend in need.

He was in his own room, the servant reported. He was not quite well, and did not intend coming down to supper.

Susannah ran instantly up to his room, tapped at the door, and was answered by a low, sad voice, which gave no promise in its tone of further intercourse.

"May I come in?" Susannah asked.

On discovering who the intruder was, Robert immediately unlocked the door. He saw that

something was wrong. "What is it?" he inquired, with his habitual kindness, and now entirely roused from his melancholy dream.

"Let me come quite into the room," Susannah said, and then in hurried words and broken whispers, she told the sad story of her brother's wretched state.

"I will go to him immediately," said Robert.

"Ah! that," replied Susannah, "is what I came to ask thee. I must myself break the matter to my father, and then I will follow thee. But keep with him, Robert. Don't leave him for an instant, and don't let any strange people enter the room; it disturbs him too much. Depend upon it, I will follow thee; for I must see the doctor, and that very soon."

Robert was gone almost before the last words were uttered; and now Susannah had to look the greatest difficulty in the face. For a few moments she stood still, and even in the darkness pressed her fingers down upon her closed eyelids, as if to keep out every chance of seeing any outward object. She wanted to look within, and there to find direction how to act. She wanted to concentrate there every power—every moving force that could be derived from faith, and hope,

and charity; for sorely she needed all; and sorely she needed reason and wisdom too.

In this state of mind, Susannah sent a message to her father, requesting to see him alone. He met her in a little breakfast room, where they were shut in for a considerable time; and then they walked out together into the dark night, no one in the house knowing where they went, nor why.

For some time the father and daughter paced to and fro in deep, earnest conversation, though carried on in under tones, until at last they set off at a rapid pace towards the village. Arrived within sight of the inn, Jacob Law drew back, out of the light which glared from a few of the windows, and especially from a lamp suspended over the entrance to the inn-yard. But Susannah went on directly to the Inn. There she found the doctor waiting, somewhat impatiently, for more than an hour had elapsed. His patient, he said, was better—decidedly better for the present.

Susannah then asked the one question of importance to her and her family,—"Was it possible for him to be removed?"

The doctor shook his head.

"Think of his situation here," said Susannah.

"Why, certainly," the doctor replied, "nothing could be much worse."

"Think of our house—so quiet, and the nursing there."

"I am fully aware of those advantages, Miss Law, yet still should be sorry to incur the responsibility myself."

"Oh! we will take that, only please tell me that he will not die by the way."

"Die? Dear me! nothing of the kind. I did not mean that. What I feared was some probable accession of fever."

"Is that all?"

"Not all, certainly; for I must not conceal from you, there is some danger—at least there has been some danger of brain fever; and I should blame myself"—

"Oh! don't think of that; how is it likely that we shall blame thee, whatever may ensue. I repeat that we are willing to take all the responsibility, if thou wilt only tell me there is no reason to fear for his life."

"If you allude to the actual journey from this place to your house, I can tell you that with all sincerity; provided only that all necessary pre-

cautions are adopted. Only, as I said before, it is a step which I could not myself advise, nor do I see exactly how it could be accomplished."

"Leave all that to us. He sleeps now, I think I heard thee say?"

"He has slept for a few minutes, and is upon the whole more composed. All the house seems quiet now, perhaps he is sleeping again."

"Then, now is our time. If it could only be managed while he remains so still!"

Susannah now spoke, and moved with a quickness and decision which seemed ready for the execution of any task, however difficult; and again hastening out of the house, she ran to the turn in the road, where her father was waiting, saying, when she found him—"The chaise, now—directly!" and then she was gone again in a moment.

The difficulties proved to be greater than Susannah had given herself time to calculate, so many things were needed which could not be obtained. The people of the house, however, were so anxious for the removal of the patient, that, besides their desire to oblige a family so generally respected as that of Jacob Law, they had their own private reasons for lending every assistance in their power.

Robert Moreton was now the greatest help and comfort. He saw and felt that he was—and this did more towards the dispersion of his gloomy thoughts than all the reasoning in the world could have effected. He was always collected and efficient when there was anything extraordinary to be done; and Susannah worked with him the more easily, because she had always regarded him in the light of a brother.

Before the party within the house had completed their preparations, the sound of wheels was heard at the door. They approached gently, and the carriage drew up so close that only a single step was left between the door and the carriage. The father was within, sitting far back. He wanted to escape the light, and could not well have borne the observation of curious eyes. His hat was drawn down, his figure muffled; and in this way he waited to receive his son! What a meeting was that after long days and nights of anxious longing! And yet, such meetings are no fable—parent and child have so met.

Lifted unconsciously into his father's arms, the poor invalid lay there as helpless as a babe. All restless, and bewildered, it was no easy matter to support him, only that his strength appeared

exhausted; and happily the wildest ravings of his delirium having ceased for the present, there was less of harrowing distress attendant upon his removal.

But Susannah, who seldom failed to remember and provide for every relative circumstance connected with even a sudden emergency, now recollected that the family at home had not been preparedfor what was awaiting them on the arrival of this melancholy party. Her mother she knew would have retired for the night, but there was her sister to be thought of, and the servants. She, therefore, requested Robert Moreton to hasten forward with all speed across the fields, and break the matter as best he could to Lydia. She had many little commissions to charge him with, which, however, required but little time to specify; and in a few moments he was gone, leaving the party to pursue their way slowly, and carefully. It would not have been very easy for any driver, under such circumstances, to satisfy Jacob Law, who continued to issue his directions to take first one side of the road and then the other; for at every jolt or start he was thrown into a state of anxiety almost insupportable, lest the heavy burden he sustained with so much tenderness and care, should be in any way disturbed.

For the present, the invalid seemed to have fallen into a state of partial stupor. Every now and then the father and daughter exchanged a few whispered words, such as—"He sleeps, I think," or, "How hot his poor forehead feels against my cheek." Could any third person have heard them, they would have supposed the most precious and beloved of human beings was being conveyed to a home of which he was the joy and pride.

What passed within the father's heart all human language would, indeed, be inadequate to describe. As in most cases of a similar nature, no words were spoken but such as related to the most trifling and familiar things of the passing moment—a hot hand—a quick pulse—an altered countenance; or, perhaps, a beautiful expression. How will such details sometimes find easy utterance in words, when the great calamity hangs over head; its horrors in the past, its threatenings for the future, alike too terrible to find a name.

Thus, then, they spoke sometimes, though very seldom, and very low, as the carriage moved slowly and carefully along, until, on drawing near the Grange, they saw from the window that Robert Moreton was ready, and waiting for them at the door.

"All is right!" he said; and then beckoning to a servant, a woman came forward with a light, while others stood silent in the entrance, some wiping their eyes with their aprons, some turning away, and then advancing again, as if they knew not how to meet the great family affliction; but still all were silent—ready with hand, and head, and heart, yet all habitually schooled into that stillness which is so peculiar to families of this denomination.

Robert had told Lydia that the wisest, and even the kindest thing she could do, was to go up into her mother's room, in order, if possible, to beguile her attention from any unusual sound that might occur; and she, poor girl, who had enough to do to command her own feelings, went immediately to discharge this duty in the best way she could. It is true, she did not know the worst, only that her brother had returned from London ill; yet she could not but suppose it must be some very serious illness to require the attendance both of her father and sister in this unusual manner. To her all suffering was spared from suspicions of a more degrading nature. It was impossible, however, to speak cheerfully when she entered her mother's room. She was

very pale, and very still; so much so, that her mother asked her if she felt poorly; and such was her inability entirely to command herself, that, instead of conversing freely, she was continually stopping short, and listening for the sound of wheels. Her manner, however, awakened no suspicion, and she so managed as to sit within the shadow of a heavy curtain, so that the light might not fall upon her face.

"I have seen very little of Susannah this evening," said the mother, after awhile; and before Lydia was able to form any definite reply, Susannah entered the room. Better schooled than her sister, and more habitually under the power of self-discipline, Susannah now looked and spoke in her accustomed manner. Her hair, her cap, her muslin collar, were all unruffled; and her placid conntenance bore no trace of any unusual emotion. Nor was this outward calm entirely assumed, for the great object was now accomplished, as it seemed, with safety, which a few hours ago looked scarcely possible; and which, under the weight of responsibility devolving upon herself, had been too serious to Susannah to be entered upon without feelings of apprehension, not easily described—feelings

which, perhaps, no one could have borne with equanimity, unless supported by an inward conviction that the act itself was right. No wonder, that Susannah was now able to enter her mother's room with tolerable composure; which, when Lydia observed, she also took courage, and began to hope that her brother's illness might prove to be less dangerous than she had feared.

Susannah made no attempt to enter upon the subject with her mother. That duty she regarded as devolving entirely upon her father. She therefore took leave for the night in her accustomed manner; and then both sisters left the room.

Lydia now commenced a series of anxious enquiries; to which her sister replied by partial explanations, begging her to wait, and to endeavour to be more composed; for no sooner had the restraint of their mother's presence been withdrawn than Lydia burst into tears, weeping so violently, that it became necessaary to remind her very seriously of the urgent need there was for self-command, for silence, for quietness throughout the house; and especially for firmness and self-government, in case of delirium coming on again.

It was well that Susannah gave her sister this

caution. It was well that Jacob Law explained the mildest features of the case to his wife, not withholding the danger which still hung about the patient of a recurrence of the malady. It was well that all necessary help was provided for the night; for before the morning dawned there were sounds to which no ear in that household was deaf, and no heart insensible.

A frightful accession of disease came on, leaving no doubt that it was now that fever of the brain which there had been so much cause to apprehend.

CHAPTER XV.

It would be useless to attempt any description of the long interval which transpired before returning reason brought back again the possibility of any intelligent intercourse between Reuben Law and his family.

The only value attaching to such a description would be, so far as might be in the present instance, to exhibit some of the more rare and striking characteristics of the Society of Friends, as a social community; for of all the various seasons of human experience, times of protracted and severe illness are those in which the Friends appear to the greatest advantage. It is then that their habitual self-command—their control even over their deepest feelings—their regard for the feelings of others—their direct application of strict common sense to all its practical uses—their prompt adaptation of means to ends—their abundant resources—their forethought—their

liberal provision are most remarkable; and pervading the whole, that never-failing order and delicacy; all which being essential parts of their daily existence, have not to be recollected then, but remain without being thought of, to control, and impart beauty to every act, and word, and thought.

Whatever the emergency may be, nay, beyond this, whatever the distress may be, in seasons of severe illness occuring in a well-ordered Friend's family—for of course these vary in their characteristics like the rest of the community—there is no hurry, no noise, no confusion, and no exhibition of feeling calculated in the least to disturb that general peace which is considered necessary to the efficient, and harmonious working of the whole. All the different agency employed at such times is remembered, and provided for, no one being at a loss to know their appointed office, nor yet neglected or overtasked. Generally speaking, the inmates of the family prefer to discharge the duties of the sick-room themselves; or intimate friends are sometimes permitted to take their share, all being so arranged, that the fitting instrument is in the fitting place—relatives and friends so situated as to afford companionship to the invalid; nurses

where necessary in their appointed place; and servants in theirs. No clashing of dignities, no disputing about duties, no standing idle, or roaming at large could be tolerated. All must have an occuptation, and a place.

In this manner the time had been passed, while poor Reuben lay insensible to all that was transpiring around him—to all the beauty, all the order, and all the kindness of the various arragements by which help was supplied, and quietness maintained; at the same time that every means was perseveringly applied which human skill could devise, or human love administer.

At last their faithful and untiring efforts were rewarded by a slight abatement of the worst symptoms of the disease; but whether the comparative calm which followed was only the natural consequence of exhausted power, or it was actually the near precursor of death, it was difficult for some time to decide. There were consequences too, which the physician spoke of, as much to be feared, even after the violence of the paroxisms should have abated. To the family, however, the relief was so great from those wild and distracted ravings, to a condition of apparent release from suffering, that they unitedly

took comfort and courage, and spoke to each other in tones more cheerful than had been heard in that house for many days. There was now more liberty too, in alluding to other matters, and the friends who occasionally called, found always some one of the family able to sit down and converse with thom.

In a situation so remote and secluded as the Grange, it was not likely that the privacy of the family should be broken in upon by many visitors. Margaret Mansfield had early been installed into office as one of the night-watchers, taking her turn with the sisters in occupying a room by the side of the patient, in order to be ready whenever anything was wanted; while Robert Moreton and William Greenfell, with some of the clerks, took their post of duty in regular rotation.

The father wished earnestly to be considered as one of these, but every one felt it must not be; and he himself was convinced in time that such duties ceuld be more effectually discharged by younger men; especially by those whose feelings would be less likely to be torn and harrowed by such expressions as the poor invalid often uttered.

Happily for Susannah, her feelings were spared any further allusion to a name, which in all

probability had only been ealled to remembrance by some chain of association connected with that woman to whose face her brother had been accustomed under a certain class of circumstances. His own family now constituted the chief burthen of his ramblings; for though he never evinced any sign of personal recognition when they were near, he continually called his nearest relatives by name, and especially his father, to whom he would sometimes appeal in the most piteous manner, while at others he imagined himself to be contending with him in some deadly struggle.

Nothing could be more distressing than these occasions; and every one tried, with the utmost solicitude, to prevent Jacob Law from entering the room at such times. But he soon learned to understand them only too well, when those who were in attendance requested him not to come in; and more than once he resisted their entreaties, saying, "Let me come in. It is my right and fitting punishment." He would then take his seat by the side of the bed, bearing meekly and quietly whatever might be said, and betraying no sign of emotion beyond what might be concealed by the hand on which he leaned, and with which he always took care to cover the upper portion of

his face. Possibly there was at that time a conflict within surpassing the ordinary range and degree of human feeling; but of this he was never heard to speak. It was thought by the servants that he began to stoop more in his person from this time than he had ever done before. But he had to stoop a little lower yet.

Even after the wildest paroxysms of frenzy had abated, it was long before the patient was in a condition either to speak or to be spoken to. He lay for the most part of the time in a state bordering upon sleep, though his eyes were never entirely closed, and sometimes Susannah thought he was pleased to feel that his family were around him—perhaps even to know that he was in his father's house, although he had no power to make so much as a direct sign of intelligence.

Often, indeed, would Jacob Law have tested this power by taking the feeble hand in his, and whispering words of tenderness, but that his judgment reminded him of the extreme importance of avoiding all unnecessary excitement. "Only, as he said to the doctor one day, "if he *should* die in this way, without a word!"

The doctor assured him this was not probable; and the father endeavoured to remain satisfied,

after he had charged every one separately, in case of any consciousness or power to speak becoming manifest, that he should be called in without a moment's delay.

It so happened, one night when Robert was the attendant, that Reuben made his first attempt at conversation. Opening his eyes a little more than usual, he beckoned for some one to come near. Robert did so, and stooping down just caught in faint whispers the words—

"Art thou alone?"

"Yes," he replied.

"Will nobody hear?"

"No one."

"Is Paul gone?"

"Yes."

"Quite gone?"

"Gone entirely, and it is supposed for ever."

"I hope so."

"We will not talk about him now," said Robert. "All is peace here."

"In my father's house!" said the poor invalid; and while a smile of ineffable sweetness was spread over his features, his eyes again closed, and he sunk into something more like natural sleep than he had ever yet enjoyed since the commencement of his illness.

Robert felt that this was no time for calling any one into the room; but with the first dawn of morning light, when the father always came to inquire how the night had passed, he drew him aside into a separate room, and there described the words, the look, and all which he knew so well would fall like dew upon the father's heart.

The sleep of the invalid was long and deep, interrupted only at intervals by sudden starts, as if some sharp pain affected him internally. Still it was sleep, and of so natural a kind, that he awoke after many hours, more like himself than before.

He now knew every one, and gave some little sign that he did so, either by a smile, or by some slight movement of the head. Of course the whole family, each in their turn, were anxious to be thus recognised; and only in this instance did they depart, in any degree, from that rule of self-denial which had hitherto kept every personal feeling in entire subservience to the welfare of the patient.

With that rebound of feeling which almost always takes place on the removal of one great and pressing anxiety, the idea began rapidly to gain ground amongst his friends, that Reuben,

having passed the crisis of danger, had nothing now to do but to go on gaining strength, under the favourable influence of kindness and good nursing. Thus constant endeavours were made to administer refreshment and sustenance in every tempting form. At these attempts the doctor sometimes shook his head, while he himself appeared occasionally perplexed as to the exact course which it would be best to pursue.

Under this difficulty, he requested to have other advice called in, a request which surprised the family exceedingly. It was instantly complied with, however, and then the father was made acquainted with the fact, that there existed inflammatory action of some internal organ, which it was impossible to use the accustomed methods to reduce, because of the extremely feeble and exhausted condition of the patient.

All could now recollect, and they had perhaps become more sensible of it lately, that whenever he was moved, Reuben started as if affected by a sudden and acute pain in his side. He would sometimes place his hand upon the part; and now that he could speak in his accustomed manner, he alluded to this pain as his old enemy, saying he had been subject to it at times a good while.

Still the family felt no alarm, it was so pleasant to see him free from those more violent sufferings of the brain. It was so pleasant to see him quite himself again. It was so encouraging too, to hear him ask for, and even specify occasionally, something else he thought he should like, that they could not even think of anything at present but these real and evident symptoms of amendment. It is true the food they brought with so much pleasure, was sometimes only tasted, and much that he proposed himself, was sent away with evident disgust; but this appeared so natural to his attendants after his having been so long unable to take food at all, that they only taxed their ingenuity the more to find out something by which he really could be tempted, and to present it in such a manner as to render a refusal almost impossible.

As days and even weeks passed on in this way, the joy attendant upon the first stage of convalescence, began considerably to abate. There was no definite apprehension spoken of by the family; but evident disappointment gave a certain tone to their manner of speaking of the case, which it was impossible to construe with anything like hope.

During the whole of this time there had been

no expressions addressed to the invalid of a nature calculated to take him back in idea to his past life, or even to revive any former feelings. He was nursed as tenderly, and cared for with as much solicitude, as if he had never been the cause of fearful anxiety to his friends. Each had some burden of the heart, some duty towards him to discharge, but all waited until he should be strong again; and perhaps all entertained some secret belief that this illness, in the effects it was calculated to produce upon his character, would supercede the necessity there would otherwise be for their efforts to induce a change of habit and feeling. At all events they waited, even the father thinking him not yet in a state to bear, without injury, the excitement of any painful thoughts, or even the exertion required for collected and definite thinking on any subject.

So the days and nights wore on, the patient being sometimes as cheerful, and apparently as thoughtless, as in his boyish days; while at other times he appeared to suffer from restlessness of body, and uneasiness of mind, without perhaps being able to explain the cause of either.

This was far from being a satisfactory state of things to any of the parties so deeply interested in

his welfare; for still the doctors spoke of symptoms which yielded to none of the remedies they had been able to apply; and on being pressed by Jacob Law to give their candid opinion of the case, they agreed in apprehensions of so serious a nature, that the father felt decided upon the steps he ought to pursue with regard to his son; for on him, as a parent, must devolve the duty of making the patient acquainted with his danger. There was room to hope, the doctors said. Youth was much in his favour, and the quiet and judicious treatment of his family; but still the father's feeling was the same, that between him and his child there must be a more entire understanding than at present existed; and that whatever human means could effect, must be done without delay, to prepare the patient for the issue, whatever it might be.

With this view, Jacob Law went up into the sick room, having first requested his daughter to see that no one broke in upon them unnecessarily, as he wished to be alone with his son for a little while.

He found Reuben more at ease than sometimes, but fluttered and feverish, and as the doctors had observed, a little disposed to talk too much, and even to wander from one subject to another, as if

there still remained some slight confusion of the brain. This, however, was scarcely so much as to be perceptible to an unpractised observer, as indeed it seldom exceeded his own naturally excited manner, at times when he was in health; and his sister Lydia especially, thought it extremely pleasant to sit and hear dear Reuben talking just in his old way.

"I have come," said Jacob Law, taking a chair, and placing it near the bed, "to sit with thee a little, while this afternoon."

"Oh! I am so glad," said Reuben, holding out both his hands, "It's just what I wanted, if only we can be really alone—if nobody else comes in."

"I feel assured they will not," said his father. "Hast thou anything particular to say to me, dear?"

"Oh! yes, father, I have been wanting so much to have a little quiet chat with thee alone."

"Well, child, what wouldst thou say?"

"A great deal—more perhaps than I shall find strength to say just now. But I shall soon be better, I suppose, shall I not?"

"We would fain hope so, but ——"

"Just lift me up a little, father. There, that will do. I can breathe better now, and I want to tell thee what I am going to do."

"Go on, dear, tell me all."

"Well then, as soon as this pain leaves me, I expect to get out again."

"Not just yet, perhaps. Remember, it is wintry weather now."

"Oh! yes. I had forgotten that. Well, at all events, I shall soon be able to do something; and I have been wishing to tell thee, that I don't want to have anything to do with that old brewery again."

"Why not, dear? Surely it is an honest calling."

"Oh; father, I have seen such scenes! But don't let us talk about them. I should like to be about in fields, and quiet places. So I've been thinking Henry might be sent away, and I might take the management of the farm. I should like so much to see the fields again. Are they green yet, father? And the copse where the primroses grow, how bright they used to look, like stars peeping out. And the violets that I used to gather for my mother. I wonder whether the bank is covered with them now?"

Jacob Law became a good deal perplexed by the way in which his son kept rambling on; and finding there was some feverish excitement about

him, he began to fear this was no time for making those serious and solemn communications with which his own mind was so heavily burthened. Still the attempt must be made.

"My child," he said, "Art thou in much pain, now?"

"No; not so much just now as sometimes."

"We have been thinking, my dear,——the doctors and I have been thinking, if thou art not better soon——"

"Thinking of taking me to some other place? Oh! don't do that. I am sure I am better here. There is no place in the world I can like so much, if only the spring wonld come, and I could get out a little into the garden."

"And is that thy happiest thought, child,—to be in the garden, amongst flowers?"

"I think it is. At any rate, it is a very innocent thought."

"Still, I think, dear, there are happier thoughts than that."

"I wonder what they are?"

"If we could rightly raise our thoughts up to the mansions of eternal rest, I think that would be happier."

"For thee, perhaps, father,—not for me."

"Why not?"

"Because I am not fit to enjoy anything so pure and holy as that. I want to lead a better life,—to try my good resolutions again, and see if they will last. But,—Oh, dear! I am very weary, father. I think I don't care to talk about Heavenly mansions just now."

This was a discouraging commencement; and when Jacob Law observed his son sink back upon his pillow, apparently exhausted, and closing his eyes, evince strong evidence of desiring not to be any further disturbed, the father's resolution completely failed him, and he sat in silence while Reuben slept, watching only those indications of internal suffering, which now so often disturbed his repose, although unconsciously so to himself.

To no member of his family, except Susannah, did Jacob Law feel able to communicate his disappointment, owing to the difficulty he found in attempting to converse freely with his son on subjects of the deepest moment.

"He appears, to me," said the father, "to have no expectation but of recovery; and in this frame of mind, we are letting the days and weeks glide on; yet every hour—how precious!"

Susannah felt deeply with her father, although

she had never spoken on this subject before. It was her post of duty to be often with her brother in the night; for now that less attention was required, she occupied a room adjoining his, and so was able to render him all the service necessary during the night.

"Perhaps," said she to her father, "the way may be opened for us, if we earnestly desire and watch for it. The night may be the appointed season. If so, I will call thee, or not, as may appear desirable."

"Well, dear," replied her father, "I shall feel that the matter is in safe hands, if it rest with thee—humanly speaking, at least. And if we both endeavour to be ready, and waiting for this service, stripped of our own will, and desirous only to do what may be laid upon us, I believe, as thou sayest, that the way will be shown us, and the manner too. Unless, indeed, the work should not be ours at all, and in that case we must be satisfied."

In this manner the father and daughter parted for the night; Susannah retiring silently to her little sleeping room, though not before she had made all the arrangements in her brother's apartment, with her accustomed stillness, and

thoughtful care. The last thing she always did was to glance towards the bed, and, if he was awake, to take leave of him with a few words of affection,—if asleep, to pass on so gently, that he never knew when those kind offices were performed, nor by whom; only that every one in the house habitually supposed it was Susanah, to whom they owed their comforts, both by night and day.

Although Reuben had appeared to be sleeping quiety when his sister left the room, she was disturbed before her usual time of rising to look after his fire, by hearing him talking to himself, as it seemed to her; and springing up, she was soon beside his bed, where, however, she found him in what appeared to be a very agreeable state of excitement, counting up, as he said, how much money he could make in one year's business, if he applied himself thoroughly to it. It was quite wonderful in one who had never been particularly addicted to business before, how much thought he bestowed upon it now. Was it that feverish excitement drove him upon something to plan and think about, and that he seized upon business because pleasure had palled upon his taste?

Whatever it might be, he laughed when

Susannah detected him in this strange kind of amusement, and as he said the night was very long, she offered to read a chapter in the Bible to him. This she often did, but never could discover with any certainty, whether her reading was acceptable or not. Now, however, she could not be insensible to some slight signs of dissatisfaction, and she therefore closed the book, and sate a little while in silence.

"Susie," said her brother, "I suppose it is all right to be intent upon making money?"

"To a certain extent," replied his sister. "But I much question whether this tendency is not often carried too far, even with Friends."

"Why yes. Suppose, for instance, some one dropped from the moon, and came to live in any family almost that one could name, what would they think was the god of that family?"

"Money, I am afraid, sometimes."

"Yes, from morning till night—money! Perhaps the family would sometimes make long faces, and talk about religion as being a very precious, as well as a very solemn thing; but when they spoke out heartily, and looked really pleased or vexed, and especially when they set themselves actually to *do* something, depend

upon it, money would be the root of the whole matter with them. And then if a poor wretch like me happens to choose pleasure instead of money, what is he thought of—where is he sent?"

"Well, dear, there is a great deal that is wrong in relation to money, I feel convinced; but I don't think either thou or I are likely to set it right."

"No, perhaps not. But I have been thinking when I get well, that I'll set myself to worship money, like the rest of the good people; and then they will be sure to think better of me."

"Ah! Reuben, it is not of much consequence what our fellow creatures think of us, even the best of them, if we are but right in the sight of Him who seeth not as men seeth."

"Susie, what did my father mean by coming to sit beside me, to day? He got nothing said after all. I thought he was going to preach to me, perhaps, as my mother does."

"He had something to say to thee, dear; but, as thou hast observed, he did not get it said."

"What was it?"

"May I tell thee?"

"Yes, do; for I have had a queer dream, or

else I was awake, I don't know which; only some one came and stood at the bottom of the bed—nay, I cannot recollect it so as to tell thee, and it seens so silly when repeated; yet still the impression remains. What did my father want to say?"

"The doctors had been talking with him."

"Ah! yes, he began to tell me something about that. And what did those wiseacres say, then?"

"Perhaps thou wilt not attach much importance to their opinion."

"I don't know until I hear what it was."

"Well, Reuben, they do not consider thee going on very well."

"No, indeed! And very much ashamed of themselves they ought to be. Why they might have made me a great deal better than I am by this time."

"After all, Reuben, human skill and human power are very limited."

"It seems so with them; but what did they say?"

"They are afraid there is something in thy case beyond the reach of their remedies."

"That I shall die?"

"Not that exactly."

"Oh! Susie, that was my dream. I heard a voice say that, as clearly as I hear my own at this moment. But I shall not die, Susie. You must not let me die. Why there are other doctors to be got. Surely somebody can do something for me. Oh, it is terrible to think of. I am not fit to die. I do not want to die."

"My love," said Susannah, gently placing her arm round her brother, who had sprung up in the bed, as if to catch at something that might hold him up—"They did not say that thou wouldst surely die—nobody has said that."

"The voice did, in my dream."

"It was only a dream, after all—nothing more."

"Cover me up, Susie, I am so cold—so shivering. Oh! I cannot—will not die! If you love me, save me from this."

"Love cannot save thy poor body, Reuben."

"What is it good for, then?"

"To save thy soul. Oh! my brother, what does it matter when we die, or how? We all must die sometime, thou knowest. Even a little accident might take any one of us off before thee, even now. What does it matter, then, if only the soul is safe?"

"Ah! that is the thing. But I—I who never cared much about my soul—"

"There is one who has cared, Reuben—yes, cared so much for thee, and me, and for all poor sinners, that he came and died for us. Was not that love?"

"Susannah, I cannot think about these things now. Another time thou shalt come and tell me all about them; for to tell the truth, I never saw anything like love in this, myself. What I want to talk about, is these doctors. What *did* they say—what *could* they say? Why, I have very little the matter with me now. I only want the right medicine; and that they seem as if they could not find, for they keep trying first one thing, and then another upon me. I wish my father would call in some better advice. There must be better doctors than these, somewhere."

In this manner the poor patient went on, talking as rapidly as his strength would permit; but never once recurring to the only subject in which for him there was either hope or consolation. At length Susannah rose, as if intending to leave him, when he seized her hand with all the energy of which he was capable, imploring her not to go, but to sit very near him, and keep his hand in hers.

Feeling the necessity there was for composure, and observing that her brother's strength was completely exhausted, Susannah did as he requested; and thus, with his hand in hers, she remained through all the remainder of that night, seated on the bed beside him.

CHAPTER XVI.

The social habits of the Society of Friends have already been described in their relative capacity, as bearing some resemblance to clanship—exclusive, as regards the world at large; but hospitable, cordial, and familiar amongst themselves. Indeed, so extensive is the range of this familiarity, that individuals will often meet and converse with the greatest freedom, who have no other claim to acquaintance than mutually recognised membership with the Society. In the same manner much of the etiquette which prevails in circles of a more general nature is dispensed with, especially amongst the young, so that their intercourse is marked by a frankness, and confiding cordiality, which would be the last features exhibited were there absent, on either side, the indubitable marks of fellowship with the same community.

In this peculiar sort of clanship, and in the cordial hospitality, confiding frankness, and general freedom and truthfulness of expression by which it is accompanied, it is more easy to recognise, than to describe, the great charm which renders the social intercourse of this Society so peculiarly attractive and binding to its members, who, having associated together on these pleasant terms from childhood, feel themselves surrounded as it were, by one great family, whose interests are necessarily the same, whose habits bring them often into social contact, and who, it must be confessed, lose nothing in their attachment to the body, for want of having their minds indirectly impressed with the idea that the Friends are *the* people. We say *indirectly*, because where humility and self-abasement are the principles most systematically upheld as personal duties, it would be strangely inconsistent for the spirit of boasting to appear under any form. Yet, so it is, from one cause or another, and most probably from many causes combined, that a bond of union, scarcely possible to be broken—an attachment to their own people almost incomprehensible to others, will often bind together, and retain in membership, individuals of this community who have but

liittle religious foundation for their adherence to the Society.

Times of trial, as may readily be imagined, are especially times for the strengthening of this social bond; and it is sometimes surprising to observe how the intelligence that one of their members is suffering, will affect the minds of others, perhaps residing at a distance; or, if near, awakening a desire to shew, by their presence in the house of mourning, that their friends are remembered in their affliction. Nor is it only as the result of natural affection and kindness, that these visits are undertaken. There is often deep feeling accompanying this social act of a nature scarcely to be classed under the head of general benevolence, or even personal regard—something in fact which more resembles a call to be obeyed, a duty to be discharged—a burden to be laid down; and highly indeed are these opportunities sometimes valued, in which the mind of a deeply concerned Friend is relieved by a few words of advice or consolation to a sufferer, or even to many sufferers, in a family when sorrow prevails.

Seldom is there a case of severe and continued illness, but some of these kind messengers arrive

with a desire, which to them is not unfrequently equivalent to a *command*, to see and converse with the sufferer, if suitable; and perhaps to leave behind some impression from the interview which may be of serious and lasting benefit.

It would be useless to assert that all such visits are equally acceptable; but it is not going beyond the truth to state that they are always well received; for even if hospitality should fail, —a thing unheard of in the Society of Friends,— there would still remain that habitual reverence, inculcated from childhood, which attaches an importance beyond all human calculation to the idea of a Friend laden with, or prompted by, what is called a *concern*.

In this manner poor Reuben Law began to be visited, as it was supposed he could bear it, by few special Friends, attracted to the house by their regard for the parents, perhaps more than by their interest in the son.

Accustomed from childhood, as all members of this body are, to behave with courtesy and respect on such occasions, the invalid submitted so far as never to refuse to see the visitor, but his acquiescence went no further; for he had but few words to offer in exchange for the kindness

thus bestowed upon him. Nor, indeed, did it seem to be expected that he should do more than remain silent while the visitor was speaking. This was easily done; and only to his sisters and Robert did Reuben betray how much of his former character there was still remaining, by alluding occasionally to some of these visits in no very serious or respectful manner.

Amongst others, Gilbert Mansfield often came and sat with the invalid. But it was impossible for him either to disturb or offend. He was so truly gentle in his own spirit—so entirely the gentleman in his own character—so afraid of being obtrusive, and when he had a few words to offer, so careful to avoid every thing like assumption or dictation; that to him alone, of all his visitors, Reuben felt constrained to express some sense of satisfaction and even of gratitude.

His mother, too, was not regardless of those duties which devolved upon her as a minister; and as such, she often took her seat in the sick-room; and falling into that silence, which the patient knew to be the prelude to what he called, "a little sermon," she would then deliver a few words in a very different tone and manner from her ordinary conversation. After which it was

her habit to rise and leave the room, like one who has discharged a sacred duty; but without apparently concerning herself about the effect produced: her own mind was relieved—with results Rebecca Law had nothing to do.

Soon after the conversation which Susannah had held with her brother in the night, the whole family were agreeably surprised by a letter from Caroline Grey announcing her intention, if agreeable to them, to come and spend a day, or perhaps more than one, at the Grange. Of course, a prompt and cordial invitation immediately followed; for never could the presence of such a Friend have been more valuable than now; and perhaps no other Friend could have been so welcome at the present time.

Reuben alone, who had never seen Caroline Grey, shrunk from the idea of being visited expressly by one whom he had heard of chiefly for her power and eminence as a preacher; and he even went so far as to beg of Susannah that he might be spared on this occasion, as he did not want to be preached to by so grand and important a person.

Susannah assured him there was nothing to fear, and much to love in the person and cha-

racter of this Friend; but the prospect still hung over him like something dreadful; and whether from this cause, or some secret disquietude, he was exceedingly restless and somewhat difficult to please. Indeed, ever since the night alluded to, he had been both gloomy and irritable, although he made no reference whatever to the subject of the conversation with his sister, only so far as to complain continually of the inefficiency of his medical attendants.

Susannah knew not what to make of this state of mind; and regretted it the more, as it entirely precluded the possibility of conversing with her brother on topics of vital importance; but, like the rest of the family, she built her hopes of some happier change upon the visit so anxiously anticipated, trusting that a person so experienced as Caroline Grey, in dealing with human character under so many different moods and aspects, would be able more effectually to reach the heart of her poor suffering brother.

At the appointed time the visiter arrived. But "it was not," she said, "to trouble the family of Jacob Law, that she had come." Her time she assured them would be passed chiefly at the cottage, as she desired much to renew her inter-

course, with the Mansfields; and if Jacob and Rebecca would kindly allow her just to come and go as might suit her own feelings, without the least change in their domestic arrangements, she should esteem such liberty a great privilege.

The little family at the cottage were highly gratified by this arrangement, and the visitor was permitted to follow the directions of her own wishes. Indeed, it would not be very easy to dispute, on any merely human grounds, with persons of this class; and they are consequently left very generally to pursue their own course without interference.

In all her interviews with Reuben, Caroline Grey had requested to be left entirely alone. At first she was received with something as much like repulsion, as good manners could permit; and her countenance when she came out of the room, was marked by deep and painful feeling. Even after joining her friends at the cottage, she was unusually silent; yet by no question, no comment, no word of any kind, did she betray what was passing in her mind, with regard to the patient's past life, and present state of feeling. As little would any one in that kind circle have thought of betraying what they knew. All that was said of

him related simply to his physical condition, and the medical opinions respecting his peculiar case.

Nor were the family at home at all better able to draw any conclusions from what they saw or heard. Reuben said nothing; but his gloominess seemed to amount almost to despair; and yet there was no evidence of softened feeling. His very countenance was distressing to contemplate. Every one felt, without expressing it, that something like an antagonistic—almost a malignant power was at work; and imperceptibly a strange awe fell upon the household, none daring to speak of what all were feeling. Jacob Law sate much alone. Susannah remained faithfully at her post of duty, though often retiring to the inner room; and Lydia wept without knowing exactly why. Robert Moreton watched anxiously. He did more. It was afterwards known to one who shared his entire confidence, that during those awful and agonising hours, he learned for the first time in his life to pray—to pray in fervency of spirit, with his soul naked and prostrate in the sight of God.

Thus then the heavy nights and days wore on, and the untiring messenger still came and went —the faithful servant still laboured in her master's

cause. There was no time to be lost. The physician told the father one day that the disease was making rapid progress; and to this cause he attributed the altered manner of his patient, and the strange expression of his countenance. He said the family must not be surprised if delirium should come on again. And well it was that he had warned them; for out of this gloomy and incommunicable state, the patient seemed to spring, as it were, with incredible rapidity, into a condition of mental excitement which spread terror and dismay through the whole household. Was he then to die thus? This was the question every one seemed asking as they passed each other in their hurried movements to and fro, each one answering by a melancholy shake of the head, the question which no one uttered, yet all seemed so well to understand. Was he to die thus? without understanding?—without recognition of those who loved him?—without hope?—without peace?

All the different branches of the family now grouped together more closely. The circle which admitted friends as well as relatives grew more compact, as if each member hoped to give as well as to receive comfort by being very near. Margaret Mansfield had her post of duty, not

much in the sick room, but ever ministering to the necessities of those whose distress prevented them from being conscious of their own wants. William Greenfell too, was there; but he also kept aloof, except when called for; finding full exercise for his judicious and thougthful kindness in other departments of duty, from which the attention of the family was necessarily withdrawn.

Dora was present too, weeping more bitterly than anyone, seldom daring so much as to look into the room, yet standing ever ready to say a kind word, or do an act of service to those who came out from witnessing those awful scenes, and listening to those agonising sounds.

From the first, Dora had been faithful to those strong ties of family connection which no true born Friend will ever disregard. All her own pleasant prospects were set aside for the present. Carl must be satisfied to wait. Her beautiful dresses must be put away, and that without reserve or regret. Through weal, and through woe, she was true to her uncle, and his family; and thus she never for a moment paused to think where her duties or her sympathies should be.

But was the patient really to die thus? It is but reasonable to suppose that many prayers

would be offered up at such a time; for who could misapprehend the silent calm of first one countenance, and then another; or the tearful eyes that came to look again, after short seasons of retirement to some quiet chamber where, if possible, the earnest supplicant might escape from the distraction of these harrowing sounds. For it was no common delirium, which now so often rent the air with exclamations. There was with all a terrible blending of the deep agony of conscious guilt, with the wildest flights of playful and exuberant fancy; so that no ordinarily constituted mind could long sustain the force and pressure of this most unnatural conflict.

At length exhausted nature began to exhibit signs of something like a return to quietness, and composure. It might be death that was actually stealing on, before intelligenec was restored. It looked like death. The countenance was certainly changing. The eyes began to look sunken and hollow—the lips blue. Large drops of perspiration stood upon the forehead. The hands—surely they were not commencing that last strange search, the meaning of which every experienced eye so well can understand. Was he then to die thus?

The room began to fill with expectant but still silent watchers. So little apparently remained to be done now, that all could gather round, to look as they supposed their last upon that sinking form.

But the hour had not yet come. Faint and deathlike as the transition was from delirium to entire exhaustion, and marked as the aspect of the malady now was by fatal symptoms, death was mercifully left a little longer in abeyance, and soon it became evident that reason was returning to assume its natural and rightful office.

By degrees the room was emptied of its many occupants, the different members of the family stealing silently away, except that one visitor retained her place by the bedside. And now all was quietness and peace. Yes; peace was settling like a dove above the head of the poor sufferer, who lay prostrate, and helpless as a child. The shadow had now departed from his brow, the anxious expression of the countenance had vanished. And was there really peace at last for one who had so long thrown every mercy and every blessing ungratefully away?

Had time permitted, it would but have been rational and right that human kindness should

have spared the patient any exercise of thought and feeling, now so recently restored. But rest was not to be his portion ever more on this side the grave. He knew it, and was satisfied. Much that had been said to him so kindly, and so patiently, during his season of gloom and horror, had sunk deeply into his soul, though he would not at the time acknowledge that it did so. He heard, he understood, he even saw the whole plan of salvation in a new light, but his heart seemed closed as by a door of iron. Now, as he lay with scarcely the signs of life upon his countenance, he feebly grasped the hand of his friend, and asked to hear again about the blessed Saviour.

It was not necessary to ask twice. True messenger of peace that she was, his friend spoke softly, truly, and with earnest faithfulness, in the fewest words which it was possible to use, setting again before him all that wondrous plan of mercy, which when once the heart is opened to receive it, comes like a flood upon the newly awakened soul, imparting at once all the energy of hope, and all the sanctity of love.

"Yes," said the poor penitent, "I see that—I feel it now. How else could such a wretch as

I be pardoned? How else admitted into the presence of holy and happy spirits, unless redeemed."

These were the first words of comfort which his lips had uttered. How thankfully they were listened to can best be understood by those who have long watched and prayed in the dark chamber of sickness without hope.

A general belief prevailed throughout the family that this was Reuben's last day on earth; and not many hours had elapsed after his release from the violence of delirium, when suddenly opening his eyes, while a slight flush rushed up to his forehead, he said to his sister, Susannah, who bent over him—"Tell my father to come—my mother—all of you come—where is?—"

A soft maternal hand took hold of his, and the smile which passed over his features plainly indicated that she who sat so near him was the friend he wanted. It was Caroline Grey, who gently held his hand in hers, as she kept her place beside him, ready to catch any word that he might utter, though not wishing to tax his attention with any further expressions of her own. Indeed, she had said all. She had dealt faithfully with him. There would be nothing to regret in that

respect, and he on his part had made large confessions relating to his past life—his past sins, and his present wretchedness. There had transpired between them in that secluded chamber, before the delirium came on, such passages of experience on the part of both, as well might shake the hardy frame, and overthrow the struggling but enfeebled mind.

But now the family must come "quickly," he said, and there was no delay. He must be raised up a little: that was done. He had scarcely strength sufficient to look around him from one beloved and well-known face to another. But, oh! with what an altered countenance he met those anxious looks! It was so calm now; so full of peace and love!

"Father," he said, "first, and now my mother, I want both your hands in mine. There is but little time, and breathing is so difficult. But I want you to know how glad I am to die—I, who lately would have given the world for but for another year! And how is this, do you think? A good angel has been with me—I think Jesus Christ himself has been with me, too. Oh, mother! dear mother! why do we not hear more about that blessed Saviour? I never saw him

blessed before—I never understood his office—I never felt his love. Why make so great a mystery of religion? It seems to me so clear and simple now. Mother, if people would preach less, and do more—What am I saying? Please forgive me; but the time is so short now, and what I want to say must be said quickly. All seems to be embodied in the one word—love. I can remember nothing else. If I could but make you all behold the love of Christ, as I do now—I, the lowest and most ungrateful of all sinners—it sounds as if I was preaching to you. Never mind, I must go on while I have breath. It is right you should all know what difficulty I have had in really believing, because the truth was never until now set clearly before me—never until this ministering angel came. Now, when you meet with any poor blind pleasure-seekers, like me, and want to bring them back, just talk to them of the unutterable love of the Father in sending his Son into the world, that all who believe on him might not perish, but have—but have——

"Father, the room grows dark. Hold me up, my dear, dear father! Let me die with my head upon thy breast. Where am I? Yes, hold me fast. Now all is safe—in my father's house!"

"In my father's house!" These were the last words; and they were very sweet words to the father's heart, although none who heard them knew exactly whether they referred to the return of the wanderer to his earthly home, or to the safety and the peace which awaited him in the eternal mansions of his Father in heaven.

CHAPTER XVII.

A quiet, unmarked resting-place in the burial-ground at the old meeting-house, was soon all that remained of poor Reuben Law. All? did we say? There were memories which nothing could efface—there were traces of his troubled path on earth, from which lessons of deep wisdom yet remained to be learned.

There are funerals attended with much sorrow, but with no regret; and such was that which took place on this occasion—a solemn funeral, marked by much tenderness, and many tears; yet possibly no single mourner amongst those who wept would have brought the loved one back again, could a wish have placed him by their side. On the contrary, all were consoled and sustained by that hope which seemed now so far to exceed what had been their darkest fears, that they sate down together under a sense of sweet and holy calm; while that love of which

the dying lips had spoken seemed to be shared amongst them as a legacy of priceless value.

Although, as already described, the funerals of the Friends are frequently attended by vast numbers of relations and other connections, yet on the present occasion it was so generally understood that the family desired to be left much to themselves, that scarcely any visitors came to the house, only a few were gathered about the place of interment, and took their places in the meeting afterwards. But the friends who had stood so faithfully by the family in their season of severest trial, did not forsake them now. Caroline Grey was with them through the day. Her addresses, both beside the open grave, and afterwards in the assembled meeting, were more than usually impressive. They were also full of encouragement and hope, conveyed in so striking a manner, that many of the deepest mourners went home comforted, as well as strengthened, and all were glad to have been there.

Towards the close of the day, feeling perhaps that the family would now be best left to themselves, this friend took her departure, amongst the tears and the affectionate regrets of those who had no other language in which to express what

she had been to them. Nor indeed were they solicitous about language just then. The feeling on both sides was too deeply—too thoroughly understood to need the use of words. Thus the messenger of peace departed, to pursue her mission of love wherever there was sorrow to be soothed, the wounded to be healed, the rebellious to be warned, or the erring to be invited back within the fold of safety.

Nor was this season of deep trial, with the shock so many had experienced, to pass over without its practical results. Most wonderful of all mysteries is that by which a God of purity seems not unfrequently to work, through the instrumentality of evil, in producing good. It was so especially on the present occasion; and never did the quiet family whose hidden life we have been tracing out, sit down together in so united, yet so resolute a manner, to search out what was wrong in their own hearts, and, with the Divine blessing, to correct it, as when the last sad duties had been discharged towards their departed son and brother.

That something had been wrong on their part, as well as his, all would have been ready to admit, had they been disposed to question one another.

But so far from this, their concern lay with

themselves, individually—personally. They might not have *done* wrong so much as they had *been* wrong; and here lay the work which they had now in hand.

Alas! for poor Susannah, she knew too well what her fault was; and it would have appeared easier to her to heave a mountain from her breast, than to cleanse it of this one secret sin. She had prayed, as many do, to *be* cleansed, and would no doubt have submitted passively, and even joyfully, to have the work done for her. But this was not all; and she began to feel that it was not, for while on the one hand she saw and knew that no good work, however urgent, could be performed entirely by herself; yet in this there was a necessity for not only a co-operation, but actually a beginning on her part, for which she was by no means prepared.

As it sometimes happens that our besetting, or our darling sin, is continually brought before us,—and it may be in kindness that it is so, Susannah was pursued perpetually, and beset at almost every turn, by the image or the remembrance of the only being upon earth who was absolutely hateful to her. Even Dora, when help was wanted in the house, had spoken of a clever and efficient woman in whom her mother and herself had be-

come much interested; and when other services had to be rendered, the same person was recommended to her from more quarters than one.

The fact was, that in so quiet and rural a neighbourhood, the arrival and settlement of any stranger was a circumstance generally known and commented upon. Even had this been less the case at the little village of Heath, there was something in the appearance and manner of the person in question, well calculated to excite curiosity, if not any deeper interest. Her urgent and persevering applications for work, her child, and her manner of alluding to her husband as not dead, gave rise to a general idea that she was a deserted wife, and as such she was regarded with considerable kindness and sympathy. It is true there were those who thought less favourably of the case, and who consequently held themselves aloof, waiting, in many instances, to see how she would be received at the Grange, when the great trouble of the family should have passed over; for such was the well-known benevolence of the house, and such the kindness of Susannah especially, that for her to refuse the claims of a friendless stranger, or to turn a deaf ear to complaints from such a quarter, would be almost sure to

stamp that individual with sufficient grounds for being suspected by the whole community.

Susannah, shrouded in a mantle of affliction, felt herself for some time excused from taking any active part in a matter so repugnant to her feelings. One day, however, and it was but a very short time after her brother's death, a woman was announced as wishing to speak to her on particular business. Constantly bearing about with her the dread of her enemy, Susannah was much relieved on finding a person from the village long known to her family. What this person wanted to say was, that a stranger woman had been taken dangerously ill at her house, and that both she and her child were entirely unprovided with any means of support. They had been received, this person said, by herself and her husband as lodgers, and she had nothing to say against the poor creature; but what with trouble, and one thing or another, she thought she was going out of her mind. And then there was the child! It really was more than she knew what to do with.

"Hast thou called in a doctor?" asked Susannah.

"No;" replied the woman, "for I don't know who will pay. And it's likely there would be a heavy bill."

Susannah most willingly drew out her purse, and gave the woman more than ordinary prudence would have dictated, She looked surprised, and thought Susannah must have made a mistake. "I was not thinking," she said of that, "only perhaps a little broth, or anything you might have in the house."

"Oh! no," said Susannah. "Take the money, please, we have not any broth now; and I do not know that it would suit us to make any."

Her manner was abrupt, her look forbidding. The woman set it down to her recent trouble, and almost wished she had not come so soon. Still the money was a wonderful help, and she went away rejoicing.

Scarcely knowing what she did, Susannah went up stairs again into the room which had been her brother's, and where she had so lately seen the pale extended figure lying on the bed. She had previously fixed upon this afternoon for sorting out, and arranging, different articles of his property, and she was vexed and ruffled at having been so disturbed. Darkness was now creeping on, too; so that her purpose seemed likely to be frustrated altogether. Busy as she was, however, she glanced from the window, and there across

the valley stood the house in which the woman lived who had just been troubling her. There, too, in a little attic window, she saw a light. That was the sick room, and, there!—

Susannah gazed, and gazed. There is a fascination in what we hate and fear, as well as in what we love. She could not withdraw her eyes from that one glimmering little light. Within that chamber how much misery might be groaning, and how much guilt?

Darkness crept on apace, and so the light looked brighter to Susannah. It was the one object in all the world to her; and yet how small a speck!

As the darkness grew deeper, Susannah began to feel that she was alone; and the stillness of that chamber became almost appalling. At last she looked round. The bed indeed was vacant, but memory filled the room with that last scene which could never be forgotten. Sisterly affection, too, brought back the look, the voice, the words then spoken; and what was the burden of those words—love—unutterable love. The love of the Father for a guilty world—the love of the Son that quailed not under degradation, cruelty, and death. Had this lesson failed to reach her

heart, accompanied as it was by the dying tones of brotherly affection? And shall the silence, the darkness, and the loneliness teach it to her now?"

Susannah stood and pondered, like one who is halting between two opinions. It was not long that she remained thus undecided, though many looks were directed alternately into the silent room, and then away across the valley to that glancing light. A little pause with her hand pressed closely over her eyes—a silent prayer—and in another minute she was gone—gone out into the twilight, telling no one whither.

The servant reported that a woman had been to speak to Susannah about some one who was ill in the village, and so accustomed were the family to these errands of benevolence, that they thought little of her not returning when the candles were lighted, and they gathered around the evening fire.

It was a hard task to Susannah, but once resolved upon, she felt no hesitation. To resolve was the great difficulty—to bend the spirit—to surrender the whole heart—to say—"*Even so Father, not my will, but thine be done.*"

We will not attempt to describe the scene pre-

sented to her view, when Susannah entered the chamber where the sick woman lay. The illness itself was not so serious as she had expected. It was the restlessness, the disquietude of mind, the wild expressions—which had frightened the people of the house; and now the great burden on her mind was, what would become of her poor child if she should die.

At the sight of Susannah her uneasiness had at first considerably increased, for she concluded immediately that a stern judge of her past conduct was come to visit her with reproaches, if not with actual punishment; and weak and wasted by a low fever, she felt but little able to cope with an attack so alarming.

But if anything could have broken the once indomitable spirit of Lizzie Brian, it was the desertion, the neglect, the long wasting loneliness, and finally, the absolute want which she had lately experienced. Throughout all, she had never begged—scarcely ever spoken of her destitution; but she had known what it was to have neither work nor food, and to sit from day to day, and from week to week, without a word or act of kindly notice from any human being.

But in addition to all this, she had known what

it was to be looked upon as something lower than a beggar; and Susannah herself had helped to plant this dagger in her heart. Lizzie was proud of her honour, her credit, her untarnished character as a woman. She was also proud of being, as she considered herself, a lawful wife; and whenever she found the fact disputed, her indignation rose beyond all possibility of control.

But, proud and passionate as she had been, her spirit was subdued now; and she spoke so mournfully about herself, and her circumstances, that Susannah endeavoured to calm and soothe her, by stating that a friend had advanced a little sum of money on her behalf, to help her through this illness; and that there were others in the neighbourhood who would take care that she had all necessary support and comfort to assist her recovery.

Cheered by these assurances, the poor woman enquired particularly about the nature of her malady, whether it was likely to be fatal, and here also Susannah was able to console her, by stating that nothing was more common than illness of that particular kind, and perhaps no illness, generally speaking, more likely to be cured by proper medicine.

This, however, was not all. There were dark

and heavy thoughts of which the woman wanted to unburden her mind; and now that she could look into Susannah's face, and meet no anger—no disgust—no loathing, but rather a calm, soft pity, she began to pour out the full tide of her long pent-up sorrows; and oh! what a history she had to tell!

And Susannah sat and heard all this, sparing herself in nothing. She even invited and encouraged this confidence, at the same time that she urged upon the woman the desirableness of telling her sad story to no one but herself. Misery must have some outlet, and who so fit a recipient as herself? She even owned to having known some of the particulars before. Her brother, she said, had told her a good deal; but of any other means of knowledge she never dropped a hint, nor did the woman ever seem to entertain the least suspicion. This was a great comfort to Susannah, and gave her strength to proceed with the duty she had undertaken.

Strangely indeed, did this poor desolate creature from this moment attach herself to Susannah; who, most undesignedly on her part, seemed to obtain a kind of power over her, such as no other human being, in all probability, had ever exercised.

And why was this power so placed in Susannah's hands? That she might use it faithfully. And so, day after day she went, about the close of the afternoon, and sate with the sick woman in that little chomber, reading to her every time, with her soft, clear voice, those words of everlasting truth, to which the poor, ignorant, untaught creature listened for the first time in her life.

Night after night Susannah came home from this humble duty, with her countenance almost radiant with peace and love. She had yielded just on that one point which was the most difficult of all; and even that was now converted into a source of inexpressible satisfation. Not that she anticipated any great results, though still labouring with patient perseverance; but so far as she had kept nothing back, but had surrendered every human feeling into her Father's hands, so far was she able to enjoy that peace which passeth understanding.

The patient lingered long, and would have suffered severely, but for Susannah's timely aid. Her recovery, however, though gradual, was complete; and then it was, especially, that the advantage derived from Susannah's countenance and kindness was found to affect her outward

circumstances; for if there still existed any prejudice on the part of those of whom she asked employment, a few words of recommendation from the Grange were sure to afford her a passport to at least a fair trial. And such was her skill and natural cleverness; such, too, her independent spirit, that she soon became a ready and efficient help to a large surrounding neighbourhood, especially valued in times of pressing business or emergency.

But the change which gradually passed over other members of the Grange family would be more difficult to describe, especially in the case of Lydia Law, who, as the reader will conclude, had not been able to resist the added attractions which her friend William Greenfell brought home with him from abroad.

The pleasure his society then afforded was but the revival of an old partiality—the first she had ever felt of that peculiar kind. How this preference had ever come to be set aside she did not know. First there had been perhaps a little womanly pique resulting from his concentrated attention to newer claims. Then that vision!—not to be thought of now—so pleasant for the passing moment, yet so baseless, and so worse than

foolish. Lydia sometimes blushed when alone, to think she could ever have been guilty of such absurdity. Her consolation was that it was buried in her own heart and had injured no one. Now the whole aspect of life and duty seemed changed to her.

This change, however, though very frequent amongst the community to which Lydia belonged, would be wholly unintelligible to the rest of the world. The outward manifestation of the change consisted chiefly in a more scrupulous observance of the rules of the community in little things, with a careful avoidance of all those playful allusions which might in former times have tended to awaken a smile at the expense of Friends, or to cast over some of their peculiarities a shade of disrespect. To this was added an encreased zeal in attending all their meetings, whether for worship or discipline; with a greater amount of seriousness of deportment in general, the casting away of a few superfluities of dress, and, finally, the putting on of a cap.

Whether it was owing to her engagement with William Greenfell, itself a very serious affair, or other feelings connected with the recent troubles of the family; certainly there was visible in

Lydia's person, manner, and character, about this time, a change which looked altogether like having lived through the experience of many years, in the course of only a few weeks.

It is true the question of the cap had long been one of extreme importance. At the time of which we write, it was the great test of consistency amongst female Friends, whether a cap should be placed upon the head about the time of completing their growth, or not. To be twenty years old, and not to wear a cap, was considered not only inconsistent and unbecoming, but scarcely decent. Poor Lydia had sometimes fallen under severe condemnation in this respect; but more frequently kind coaxing hands had been laid upon her uncovered head, and now and then a few tears, especially from her mother, had attested the earnestness and sincerity with which this departure from consistency was deplored. For some time past she had seriously questioned within her own mind, whether it was right to allow her parents to be grieved themselves, and blamed by others, on account of her obstinacy in so mere a trifle; and now that her heart was softened by so many combining causes, and the subject of the cap was again placed before her,

as it always was, in the light of a culpable unwillingness to give up all—to come out from the world—to make an entire surrender of the creaturely will—and a great deal more to the same effect; now that she felt willing to do almost anything in the way of submission, and devotedness of heart, and life, why not begin with the cap first; and then, as the Friends so often told her, perhaps her way would become clearer, and greater things would be appointed her as tests of farther willingness and obedience.

It must not be supposed, however, that Lydia felt, or rather found, this at all a punishment, or even a cross. William Greenfell wished it, and she looked very pretty in her cap. It was, in fact, composed of the most delicate and transparent material, and the most becoming form, so that no observer of taste, having once seen it upon her head, would have wished it off again. No remarks, however, were made by the family. It was approved by all. And Lydia sat under this elaborate adornment, most assuredly a lovlier, if not a better woman.

One eye there was however, which, glancing towards the cap, beheld it under a different aspect. Robert Moreton could not see it without

remembering the little compact entered into by himself and Lydia, that they would both begin at the same time, and begin in concert, to wear the badge of Friendliness together. Lydia had forgotten this. In all probability it had never sunk more deeply into her heart, than the moonbeams that glanced upon her forehead. Well, let that pass. It was nothing to him now, never could be anything to him again. *With* her he could have worn a badge of any kind—almost of shame, and worn it proudly; but without her?—no, he would not alter his appearance, now. His coat must pass, let Friends think what they might; and he must build the fabric of his future life on something more important than his dress.

But amongst the changes consequent upon their troubles, those which affected the heads of the family were perhaps the most striking in themselves, as well as the most influential upon others. The mother, who would in all probability, have been inaccessible to any other appeal, shrouded as her life habitually was, behind a curtain of solemn mystery, which none ever thought of penetrating—the mother had been deeply impressed by some of the last words of her son, and through them her mental vision had been cleared of much

that had tended to obscure her daily walk, and nullify her influence for good.

It is possible that the sorrowing parents dwelt often and faithfully upon these topics, in their private communion with each other; for, not the mother alone, but both appeared from this time to see their social duties in a different light. "Less preaching, and more living of the Christian life," might have been their motto, adopted from this time; and especially in the case of her who had so long allowed herself to shrink from active and ordinary duty, it was manifested in more cheerful and familiar intercourse with her family, her servants, and all who might be staying in the house; so that visitors, unacquainted with the real cause, were apt to remark upon the improved health, and the encreased energy and usefulness of Rebecca Law.

With the father there was something working in the secret of his heart, which filled him with grave, earnest thoughts, for some time wholly incommunicable, and understood by none. Whatever with him was deep and earnest, was sure not to be long before assuming a practical form; and one day, when he had seemed, almost for the first time since Reuben's death, to be his

own animated self again, he requested his family to gather closely round the winter's fire, as he had something to lay before them which concerned them all. William Greenfell, now recognised as a member of the family, was present; and Robert Moreton, who was regarded more than even as a son.

"It is but a business matter, after all," said Jacob Law, when each member of the little circle was quietly seated; "but as it will make us all considerably poorer than we have been accustomed to think ourselves; it may be more serious in its consequences than in itself. In the first place, then, I am going to give up my business."

"Indeed!" said William, "Hast thou disposed of it then?"

"No; nor am I going to dispose of it. In short, it has become an abominable thing to me; and I hate it altogether—hate it for what it is associated with, and what it is instrumental in doing.

"Now no one need argue this point with me. If I was likely to have to beg my bread, I should do the same. The thing *must* be done, and *shall* be done. I only desire direction, so as to do it rightly. For some time this matter has pressed upon me with almost intolerable weight. I have

argued against it on pecuniary grounds, and when pushed off from that, have argued that it gave me influence over a large body of work-people, and others, to do them good. I have even argued that it gave me power to prevent any great extreme of disorder in those vile places where this abominable compound is sold; and, lastly, I have argued that some of the best of men have been engaged in this business. And then I have looked into the little silent chamber up yonder, and I have seen the dying form, and heard the dying words of my poor, poor Reuben!

"Don't mind me, children, I am growing an old man, I think; and just as I fear that time may be short with me, I wish to make haste and do what is required at my hands. So, with the closing year, the old business in that large place will close. I shall not sell it, because I will not place it in the power of others to do what I can no longer do myself, as I believe, *without sin.* I judge no other man, mind you; but for me,—seeing what I have seen, and feeling what I have felt,—it would be sin. Therefore, as I said, the business ceases with the old year; and would that the wickedness with which it has been connected might cease with it.

"I have delayed sometime in closing, on account of the many people it employed. Be sure I shall not neglect their interest, cost me what it may. For myself, I shall have my land left; and thou and I, Robert, must work on peacefully and harmlessly upon that. Wilt thou remain with me, Robert, and be a son to me in my old age, as thou hast ever been?"

Robert Moreton rose, and placed his hand in that of his friend and father, as the pledge of his part in the compact; but he could not speak, nor was there an eye undimmed with tears, in all that little circle; for they knew what this sacrifice must cost, and they felt what that wrench of human feeling, and uprooting of human interests must have been, before such a sacrifice could have been determined upon.

After a little reflection, the plan commended itself to all. There was not a dissentient voice; and Jacob Law had finally the satisfaction of knowing, that his whole family believed he had never done an act of duty more entirely right in itself, or more honourable to his own character.

CHAPTER XVIII.

We must now request the reader to pass with us over a few wintry months, and again to look in upon the domestic and social affairs of those whose quiet lives we have been describing, after the pleasant Spring has again scattered beauty upon the earth, and brought gladness to all animated nature.

It must not be forgotten, however, that long before the flowers began to bloom, even before the birds began to sing, there was one bright link the less in the chain of affectionate and social feeling which bound together the little circle so often united at the Grange.

Dora Greenfell had only delayed her marriage until the first season of sorrow should have passed, and her relations should have regained something of their natural composure; still cherishing all her own agreeable anticipations, but no longer making any attempt to interest her friends in those trifles

which had occupied so large a share of her own thoughts. Perhaps, as the time drew near, she felt it a more formidable thing than she had expected to leave her mother, and to enter upon so new a life. At all events, if she was not less confident in her expectations of happiness, she was more serious, and said less about it. And when at length the great event drew near, and she came for the last time to the Grange for the purpose of taking leave, it was more affecting than her friends knew how to bear, to feel her affectionate caresses perhaps for the last time, and to witness her sobs and tears. They all knew that this was but a natural outburst of feeling, and that those tears would soon be dried; but yet there was something peculiarly sad to them in thinking she must go so far away, unsupported by any of her nearest connections through the most important and serious transaction of her whole life.

Dora had relations in London, not members of the Society of Friends, and from their house it was arranged that she should be married. Her mother accompanied her thus far, though she could not be present at the ceremony; but was abundantly consoled to find how cheerfully her daughter was able to conduct herself through this

and the remainder of the time they remained together. Nor were the family at the Grange less gratified to receive from Dora herself, only a few days afterwards, a lively description of her own marriage, with many of the leading characteristics of that most interesting event.

And so it was that little Dora passed away from the scenes of her childhood, to fill a more important place, and to make, as every one believed she would, a most excellent wife.

Her absence was long felt at the Grange, and would, perhaps, have been more so, but that before the Spring arrived there were other events in progress of a very important and absorbing nature—no less than the marriage of Lydia and William Grenfell.

Quietly, rationally, and with as little ceremony as possible, these events are conducted by the Friends. But there is one circumstance attending them of so peculiar a nature as to demand some notice here.

At the time when the Friends were a persecuted people, and when liberty to marry after their own fashion had been reluctantly granted them, it was necessary that the contract, in all its legal phases, should be made as public as possible.

Thus the individuals contracting the engagement were at one time obliged to make public announcement of their intentions in different meetings, long before the marriage itself took place. By degrees, the necessity for doing this was relaxed; so that in the instance with which we are concerned it was only required that William Greenfell should declare his intentions singly, in the meeting to which he belonged, and then that the two together should make the declaration unitedly before another meeting. Time, in these cases, must be allowed for any who have prior claims upon either party, or for any who see reasons why the matter should not proceed, to state their objections, as in the case of banns being published; and no such objection being brought forward before another monthly meeting, the parties are then pronounced to be at liberty to proceed with their intentions.

For a delicate lady to do this before a solemn assembly, and actually to utter the declaration of her part in the contract with her own lips, would seem a little at variance with the retiring habits, and the modest demeanour for which this class of women are so remarkable. But we have never heard of that article in the rules constituting

a barrier, or even a hindrance, to such proceedings. So Lydia, having gone through this part of her duty, was really an affianced bride, and awaited the subsequent liberation with becoming patience.

A month, or less than that, according to the arrangement of the meetings, generally transpires between this public declaration and the actual marriage: and this was an interval of peculiar interest at the Grange; for though Lydia had sometimes thought her cousin Dora a little extreme in the importance she attached to the minor matters connected with her marriage, we will not venture so far as to say that the bride, on the present occasion, was philosophically indifferent to the vast variety of preparations going on around her. Indeed, the matrimonial equipment of a female Friend was, at the time of which we write, an affair of no light consideration to any of the parties concerned, as it generally included a large amount of fine linen, and other household goods; the respectability of the bride and her connections being to some extent judged of by the quality, as well as the quantity, of her personal property in such articles.

Thus the measuring, cutting out, fitting, sewing, and packing, to say nothing of the pur-

chasing, of all which a bride was fitted out with for her future home, was indeed an affair of immense and accumulated interest; the actual work that was necessary, being such as to require a considerable length of time, especially where, as in most country places at that period, the members of the family generally did a large portion of the work themselves.

As in the times of our ancestors, so it long remained with the Friends to be a large part of every woman's duty to *sew*. Rich or poor, distinguished or insignificant, they must sew; and the practice of sewing in quietness from morning till night must have exercised considerable influence upon individual character. We are not sure that this rule of perfect quietness was always maintained, nor that moments which might otherwise have been a little wearisome, were not occasionally relieved by gossip as genuine as could be found elsewhere. But where books were not relished, or not approved, which was frequently the case with regard to general literature; and especially where the habits of the family were strict, and parental authority rigidly enforced, nothing could well be more narrow, constrained, and monotonous than this kind of existence,

devoted as it was almost exclusively to plain sewing.

The custom of executing amongst themselves the great business of preparation had not entirely disappeared at the time of Lydia's marriage; so that busy hands were in requisition both at her father's house, and at the cottage. Two distant relatives, called cousins, had been invited on this occasion to stay in the house for some time previous to the marriage; and they, as well as Margaret Mansfield, plied their needles with unceasing assiduity. Alice Mansfield also was sometimes able to take her share in these duties; and whenever a nice point had to be decided upon, or a graceful turn given to anything in hand, it was taken to Alice, whose exquisite taste in all such matters no one felt disposed to undervalue. All were pleased, too, to have her sympathy and co-operation; for though her physical strength was very feeble, there was an energy and decision about her character which no amount of suffering had been able to subdue, and which still rendered her not only interesting and valuable, but most useful, as a Friend. Her malady, too, which at one time made such rapid progress, seemed almost as if it had been arrested by the

happy change to her present home. She herself was not insensible to the fact that its progress, though gradual, was certain, and its issue sure; but her friends felt no immediate alarm on her account; and it was to them all a great satisfaction to see how little ground she had lost during the winter months, so that the spring found her again able to rejoice in the general gladness of nature.

If the humbler and more ordinary items of preparation to which allusion has been made were such as to require the assistance of many executive and willing agents, what shall we say of the bridal costume itself; and of all those exquisitely fabricated shawls, and dresses, sufficient in quantity to last any reasonable wearer for at least ten years of active life? To these also, was attached considerable weight, by those who passed hasty and critical judgment upon the bride, and her connexions.

If on the present occasion, there was less scope for selection than when the range of choice extends to the extreme of fashionable embellishment, there was infinite variety of tint and shade comprehended under those two composite definitions of brown and drab; the latter extending through every degree of fawn, dove, and pearly grey, to the purest silvery white; the bride herself being only distin-

guished from her bridesmaids, by a somewhat lighter hue pervading the whole of her costume.

Without veils, or lace of any kind, and without flowers, or gems and trinkets, it might seem impossible to fit out an imposing array of female attire. And yet the richness of material, the perfect exactness of form and fold, and above all, the almost dazzling purity, which imparted to the figures something like the tone which painters give to angels' wings—all these combined were quite sufficient to prevent the want of any other ornament being felt. Indeed, their tendency was rather to excite a feeling that any of the ordinary embellishments of female dress would have been out of place, if not absolutely vulgar, when compared with the chaste and almost classical beauty of these softly moving figures.

But we have not quite reached the bridal morning yet, and in justice to Lydia it must be stated that in all this business of preparation, her's was a very different place from that which her cousin Dora so recently had filled. With Lydia it was actually impossible to be detected in anything like hurry. Perhaps her greatest charm consisted in the calm, soft dignity of her general deportment, which, more than any symmetry of form or features, imparted a certain loveliness to her appearance, often

more attractive than absolute beauty. Not that her form was in any way defective, except in those acquired graces which a true Friend's education affords no opportunity of cultivating. Both in form and face she was peculiarly one whom the eye delighted to dwell upon, without the beholder always knowing why; and never was her appearance more remarkable for this distinguishing and all pervading charm, than on the day of her marriage.

It is in no discourtesy to the gentlemen present on the occasion—the "men Friends," as they are generally called—that we do not specify them individually, as they took their appointed places; for now, as on all other public occasions, the greatest order was maintained, by all having been carefully planned and arranged before-hand; but because whatever there might be amongst them, either distinguished, or heroic, it was certainly not rendered prominent by any external manifestation. Each filled his place with decorum, some with dignity, and no one more so than the bridegroom himself.

On the brightest of Summer mornings then, the party set out for the old meeting house, where the marriage was to take place, and where a large number of persons assembled to see the show, as

well as to be present at the meeting. Many carriages were in requisition, but no white favours, nor other emblems of a marriage ceremony were visible. So far as the bridesmaids extended, each was furnished with a partner; and the order of relationship not being the rule observed beyond a certain limit, it so fell out, that Margaret Mansfield and Robert Moreton were the two whose place it was to follow nearest to the bride and bridegroom. In this manner the party walked into the meeting; so far as they were concerned, the order being dispensed with by which men and women are placed on opposite sides.

As usual on all such occasions, there were not wanting Friends of the weightier sort who took their place in the gallery, or seat appropriated to ministers and elders; and by one of these a short address was given in the early part of the meeting. Then followed a solemn silence; and then the bride and bridegroom stood up, hand in hand, and before the hushed assembly, each uttered the few solemn and binding words by which they were made man and wife. After they sat down, another silence followed, then a prayer from one of the ministers, then the reading of a legal certificate, which had subsequently to be signed; and

then, after another short address, the meeting broke up, and all went out again in the same order they had observed in coming in.

Unlike the rest of the world, the Friends long held tenaciously, and as if by preference, to the old custom of keeping the bride and bridegroom with them throughout the whole of the day, which is generally one of great social enjoyment. It sometimes happens that the whole party repair to some place of favourite resort in the neighbourhood, for which purpose those old fashionable family hotels, once so well known, and situated often in the midst of beautiful scenery, used to offer the most liberal and inviting accommodation.

Such was the plan adopted in the present instance, for there were still associations connected with the Grange, which it would not have been pleasant to awaken; and yet against which it might have been impossible for the family to protect themselves; for not only now, but for many subsequent years, there were names and circumstances sometimes alluded to by visitors at the Grange, from which some of the family shrunk with feelings not easily described.

So well had William Greenfell understood this, that it had been his own proposition to spend the

day at a well-known place in the neighbourhood, from whence the most agreeable walks, and excursions could be made along the banks of a beautiful river hemmed in on either side by rocks, and steep ascents, and shaded by the drooping boughs of overhanging trees. Upon the simple pleasures derived from natural scenery, and upon the amusement of rambling walks, the Friends were peculiarly dependent at such times. All felt this, and all the party rejoiced in the prospect of a long day of enjoyment amongst this lovely scenery.

One more peculiarity attendant upon these arrangements is worthy of notice. We have already observed how much that transpires in ordinary life without notice, and without interference, is brought by the Friends under public attention, as subject to their extraordinary and all-pervading discipline. Even on the occasion of a marriage taking place in the most orthodox and well-ordered families, this discipline is in no way relaxed; for an appointment is always made for some well-esteemed Friends to be present on the occasion, and to report to the meeting afterwards, whether it was conducted in a proper manner. Such appointments, however, are seldom made without some regard to the parties most

concerned, those Friends being generally selected who are thought likely to be acceptable in their social as well as their official capacity. In the present instance, Gilbert Mansfield was one. George Rutherford had been mentioned, but Jacob Law strongly evinced his objection, though upon what grounds he did not feel himself called upon to explain.

The fact was, that ever since his interview with this individual in London, Jacob Law had shrunk in his own mind from all intimate acquaintanceship with a man who could evince more feeling for the loss of his money, than for the loss of his child. He had not felt it necessary to withhold all intercourse between the families, because that would have brought the affair under public discipline, as a breach of love. He and his wife had therefore taken the opportunity of the illness of Johanna to pay the family a visit of friendliness; and glad they were ever afterwards that they had made this effort, for the poor woman had pined away and died, without any one, perhaps, beyond themselves, knowing what the sorrow was which had eaten up the hidden springs of her isolated existence.

But to return to more pleasant themes,—more

genial and refreshing scenes. Not that we have the most remote intention of discussing the beautiful and elegant repast which the people of the Hotel were so celebrated for setting out; nor how it was prolonged with many a sober jest, and many a quaint rejoinder,—many a heartwarn reminiscence of old times, and many a youthful anticipation of glad times yet to come.

All these we must leave; for the day became unusually sultry, and the young people, especially, were eager to be out amongst the rocks, and woods, by the banks of the clear rippling river, or loitering along shady walks, where they might listen to the birds and watch the murmuring water in its crystal flow.

Whether all were charmed with these pictures that day, or not, we pretend not to say; but certainly, when Robert Moreton offered his arm to Margaret, and when she leaned upon it with the prettiest little hand that ever was encased in a neatly fitting glove, there appeared no reluctance on the part of either to separate themselves a little from the rest of the company, so as to take a more retired and unfrequented path.

Before the afternoon sun had begun to shine aslant into the narrow valley, the day had become

intensely hot. It was that still and breathless kind of heat which not unfrequently precedes a thunder storm. Still there was no visible cloud —no change in nature, only additional pleasure in looking at, and listening to, cool running water, and in sitting under the shade of closely interwoven trees.

Margaret Mansfield we have already described as always a pleasant and remarkably cheerful companion, not much addicted to sentimental sorrows, but very quick to feel and sympathise with real ones. It was no drawback to her general agreeableness, rather the contrary, that she had a tolerable gift in the way of easy and playful chat, which in the exuberance of her own quick sense, and kindly feeling, she could carry on under almost all circumstances, and with almost any companion not positively disagreeable to her. Had she been solicitous about always eliciting a response, she might have thought the companion of her walk to-day was far from contributing his share towards the amusement of the passing hour. But so far from that, she went on in her accustomed manner, which, however, must not be understood to be *mere* talk, for there was generally something piquant or original in what she said; and if not,

she soon passed on to something else, wholly regardless of the effect of conversation as an art, and equally unconscious of the pleasure which hers, in particular, was capable of affording.

But as these two are wandering on, a sudden pattering of large rain-drops is heard upon the leaves. A laugh—a run to save her wedding garments, and Margaret is soon placed in safety beneath the shelter of a projecting rock, by which a sort of natural cave is left below, so close to the edge of the water, as only just to leave room for entrance. Here the two companions seat themselves upon some scattered fragments of stone, well pleased at first to have secured such a resting place; for soon the rain is followed by a tremendous peal of thunder, and then a lightning flash, and then another peal, until the whole valley seems filled with terrible reverberations resounding from rock to rock. And now the sheeted rain comes hissing down, until the whole of that little world of beauty, lately so still that the hum of the wild bee, and the chirp of the grasshopper were sounds distinctly heard—the whole is now one vast confusion of the angry elements that seem to rend the earth, and fill the air with tumult.

Robert Moreton was of that habit of mind which is peculiarly and solemnly impressed by sights and sounds of this nature; and he stood, with breath almost suspended, listening for every peal of the rolling thunder, and watching every flash which followed.

At last these sounds began gradually to abate, but the rain continued. Margaret had listened like her companions, but with different feelings, for every now and then, she was able to laugh at the strangeness of their circumstances, shut up in that wild cave, and in their wedding dresses. In that manner she amused herself, especially when the storm began to abate, and she thought of the picture they would make when appearing again amongst their friends.

Suddenly, however, her laughter ceased. She drew her arm within that of her companion, and pointed to the rising waters of the rapidly swelling river. Robert looked, and started back. His next impulse was to draw his companion close to his side.

This was a real danger. Margaret burst into tears; but immediately looking up into his face, she exclaimed, "Robert, do save me — now quickly, before the water is too deep."

It was the natural appeal of woman, and woman's arms were clinging round him. Robert waited not a moment, but gladly and proudly plunged into the stream, bearing his precious burden safe above the surging waters, and along the valley to where the danger ceased.

The circumstance occasioned no small excitement amongst the wedding party, who had begun to be seriously alarmed at the long absence of two of their number. But it had consequences more serious than this. Whether that appeal for help had first suggested the idea, we pretend not to determine; but certainly from that time there was no one who could claim a more legimate title to help Margaret Mansfield than Robert Moreton, and no one whose help she was so willing to receive.

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